

Dudley

CHRONICLE



Thursday, January 12, 2017

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SPEEDING DRIVER WHO KILLED GEORGIE IS JAILED FOR SIX YEARS



Georgie Evans - died at scene

A MOTORIST who killed an 18-year-old Himley woman in an horrific road crash after hitting speeds of up to 100mph is starting a six year jail sentence.

Polish immigrant Kuba Oles was travelling so fast when his Audi A6 hurtled into Georgie Evans' Ford Fiesta that her car was torn in half, Wolverhampton Crown Court heard.

Witnesses estimated he had been travelling at up to 100mph in a 30 limit when tragedy struck moments after two other drivers remarked he was 'going to kill somebody', revealed Mr Paul Spratt, prosecuting.

The court was told the crash happened less than a month after Oles was

reported to police for dangerous driving. The Audi had narrowly missed a bus as the 24-year-old driver momentarily lost control on a roundabout before accelerating in Priory Road, Dudley, on October 27. A van driver he then overtook estimated that the car was doing at least 80mph in the 30mph zone as it passed him – and ploughed into Miss Evans seconds later.

Experts who viewed footage from CCTV cameras in the area agreed with the 80mph estimate and pointed out that the Audi was still accelerating.

The victim was driving correctly and turning into the road at a junction.

Mr Spratt said: "The impact was so

significant that the other vehicle split in two. It led to her suffering such significant injury that it is highly likely Georgie died immediately."

Oles did not hand himself into the police until 18 hours later, making it impossible for him to be checked for drink and drugs.

Oles, from Beaconsfield Road, West Bromwich, who came to this country in 2013, pleaded guilty to causing death by dangerous driving, leaving the scene and failing to report an accident. He also admitted the earlier incident of dangerous driving. He was jailed for six years with an extended four year licence period and banned from driving for 14 years.



Kuba Oles - jailed

TRANSPORT

£550,000 bus station revamp is to start

THE £550,000 upgrade to Merry Hill bus station will start on Monday.

The revamp of the shopping centre bus station is being carried out by centre owners intu and Transport for West Midlands, part of the West Midlands Combined Authority.

The station refit is due to be completed by late spring and during this time the car park near Matalan will be partially closed.

The investment acknowledges the high number of shoppers who arrive at the shopping centre by bus, which intu says is as high as one in five.

The renovated bus station will feature real-time information boards and new enclosed shelters with covered walkways.

FUNDING

£1.5m park project moves step closer

CAMPAIGNERS are closer to securing a £1.5 million lottery boost which could see a cafe created and bandstand revamped at Stevens Park in Quarry Bank.

The park, off Thorns Road, has reached the second stage of bids for the Heritage Lottery Fund and Big Lottery Fund.

The money could be used to make a number of improvements including the restoration of the Whitehouse building on Park Road to include a cafe.

PLANNING

Replacement of care home backed

PROPOSALS to demolish a care home and build a 66-bed home next to the site in Kingswinford have been recommended for approval by council planners.

The new care home is planned beside New Bradley Hall, off Compton Drive, which will be torn down once the new build is finished and residents moved across.

A 5,000-name petition previously halted closure of New Bradley Hall after Dudley Council said it could no longer afford to run it. The home and jobs were transferred to not-for-profit organisation Black Country Housing Group, who say the existing home is no longer fit for purpose.

INSIDE

FIRM BACKS BLUEBIRD BID



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Parkrun launches at stadium



Run director Nick Price and Dudley Mayor Councillor Mohammed Hanif with runners at Dell Stadium

HUNDREDS of runners braved the cold to take part in the first Parkrun in Dudley.

The weekly running event, which is held at parks across the county, has now arrived in Dudley's with the first Parkrun being held in the borough at the Dell Stadium, Pensnett.

More than 300 people took part in the run, which is a 5km route.

Started by run director Nick Price and Mayor of

Dudley Councillor Mohammed Hanif, it began with two laps of the Dell Stadium's running track. The route took runners along the canal before returning onto the track for a final two laps.

At the finishing line runners were given barcode chips which were scanned with the runner's individual identification code. Later the runners got their time and position via a website. For more details, visit www.parkrun.org.uk/dudley website.

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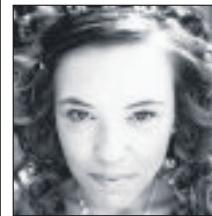
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Crash victim Nadine Foster

A MAN has admitted causing the death of a Stourbridge teenage mother by dangerous driving.

Dylan Stringer had been driving at a minimum of 78mph through Oldswinford immediately before the crash on Hagley Road, Wolverhampton Crown Court was told. Former Dudley College student Nadine Foster, 18, was a passenger in a Ford Focus being driven by Stringer when it crashed into a wall in the early hours of April 16. She was taken to hospital but died later.

Stringer, of Wychbury Road, Stourbridge, pleaded guilty to causing Miss

Foster's death by dangerous driving at Wolverhampton Crown Court on January 4.

Mr Paul Spratt, prosecuting, said the 23-year-old had been driving at a minimum of 78mph before the crash.

During the 10 minute hearing Stringer spoke only to confirm his name and enter his plea. He faces two further charges of causing death by driving when unlicensed and causing death by driving when uninsured. He was not asked to enter pleas to those counts.

Judge Simon Ward told him: "I am not going to sentence you today. I want

to know more about you than I do now."

Mr Richard Butcher, defending Stringer, said his client had suffered several injuries himself in the crash.

Joseph Chance, 25, of Murcroft Road, Stourbridge, is also accused of causing Miss Foster's death by dangerous driving. He did not enter a plea and his case was adjourned until today (Friday, January 13). He is also charged with causing death by driving when unlicensed and causing death by driving when uninsured. Both men were granted bail on the condition they do not have contact with each other.

Zoo bosses are just wild over £275k plans

DUDLEY Zoo's farm and four of the enclosures are in line for a revamp costing £275,000 to bring visitors even closer to the animals.

Chief executive of the Castle Hill attraction, Derek Grove, has revealed details of major work planned during 2017 as part of its five-year re-development programme.

Each of the projects aims to give the creatures more space at the same time as giving visitors a better view of them, regardless of whether the animals are outside or taking shelter inside.

The zoo has also unveiled a new logo ahead of its 80th year reflecting the animals, Dudley Castle, the ancient wooded hillside and its Modernist Tecton structures.

Mr Grove, said: "We wanted a logo that people could easily recognise as being Dudley Zoo and Rachel Lane's design, which was voted for by our staff members, should do just that by incorporating all the important elements generally associated with the site."

Viewing

The biggest scheme planned for next year, costing £100,000, is work to increase the size of the snow leopard enclosure, which is due to be completed by the summer.

By extending the one side of the existing exhibit, bosses will also be raising the height of the enclosure and the viewing area due to the gradient of the land.

Mr Grove said this would give visitors to the zoo, which celebrates its 80th anniversary this year, better opportunities to see the cats.

"Snow leopards, like all animals, like to be up high but this means they can be harder to spot," he explained. "All the work we are doing is about giving the animals better facilities and making sure our visitors can see them."

"We know that if visitors come on



Dudley Zoo chief executive Derek Grove with a picture of what the new Snow Leopard area will look like

a wet day they might not be able to see many animals because they are all taking shelter in the warmth. This is a double negative and that's why it's that we ensure that from the minute they get to Dudley Zoo they are seeing animals", he added.

There also plans to improve facilities for younger visitors by extending the farmyard which is popular with children and their families. A new barn will also be built as part of the scheme which will cost £90,000 and be completed by Easter.

Mr Grove said: "The farm has al-

ways been very popular but it's very old. We want to have a barn which is two and a half times bigger and have more space for the farmyard."

"It's all about giving our young visitors a better experience. They are far more interested in holding a chick or stroking a rabbit than they are seeing a lion lying down a distance away."

"It's really important that we cater for age ranges. We know people who came to the zoo as children, then they brought their own children and now they are bringing their grandchildren."

The other projects include a new parrot aviary which will cost £40,000 and will be completed by Whitsun. The three existing small aviaries, which date back to the 1980s, will be replaced with a much larger single aviary. The final scheme is the small cat enclosure which will be completed by Easter.

The money for the projects is coming from zoo funds which is raised through entrance costs as well as animal experiences, donations, events and the animal adoption packages.

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Closure of hospital ward will not now take place

A MOVE to close a ward at Russells Hall Hospital was abandoned because of the increasing demand on the hospital's accident and emergency department, health chiefs have revealed.

The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust had planned to shut Ward A1 and reduce temporary staff numbers as part of more than 50 cost-cutting schemes but then faced an 'unprecedented' level of demand over the Christmas period.

Instead of being closed, the ward has instead been converted into a new GP-led rehabilitation facility called The Evergreen Unit.

More than 600 patients poured into A&E at Russells Hall every day over the Christmas and New Year period.

Through the ward closure and other money saving initiatives the trust was looking to save a total of more than £11.9 million over the financial year 2016/17, but they now expect the savings to be closer to £10.2 million.

Hospital bosses also disclosed that planned savings have been hit by a delay in introducing new medical equipment.

Dr Paul Harrison, acting chief executive, said: "We have 57 individual Cost Improvement Programme schemes underway which aim to improve patient care and experience, whilst also ensuring good value for money. So far this year, projects have saved the trust £6.8m. By the end of the financial year, we expect the saving to be £10.2m."

"Some of our projects have not yet made the level of savings we anticipated."

Disruption feared due to roadworks

TRAFFIC disruption is anticipated when a busy Black Country road is shut at night for essential repairs.

Sandwell Highways has revealed work is needed to repair joints on the viaduct on the Black Country New Road in Tipton as part of scheduled maintenance.

There will be overnight lane closures between 8pm and 6am this week until tomorrow (Friday).

A spokesman for the council said: "This is part of rolling roadworks that had been planned by our highways team. It is not an emergency closure."

The authority adds that after each night's work all lanes should be back open in time for the morning rush hour.

Sandwell Council is also keeping motorists updated via Twitter, Facebook and its website.

'Barmy Ball' in aid of air ambulance

A BLACK-TIE event is being held in Brierley Hill to raise funds for the Midlands Air Ambulance.

The Barmy Ball take place in the Copthorne Hotel on March 25. Tickets are priced at £35 and are available by calling (01384) 887900.

Pensioner is left shaken after robbers tied him up

A PENSIONER had his hands tied by masked robbers who raided his home in Dudley, stealing a First World War medal.

The criminals struck at the 79-year-old's home in Wren's Nest, just minutes before the arrival of the New Year.

Police have now launched an appeal for information in a bid to catch the raiders.

The resident was awoken by noises just before midnight on New Year's Eve. When he opened his back door to investigate he was grabbed by two masked men who pushed him back inside the house.

He was held in the corner of the living room by one of the men, who tied his hands behind his back, while the second searched through drawers and cupboards for valuables.

A war medal was taken and a bundle of £50 notes that are no longer legal tender.

The elderly homeowner was released as the men left the property.

Detective Constable Gareth Homer said: "This was a really nasty incident which left the homeowner very shaken. We are carrying out thorough investigations but anyone with any information is asked to call 101."

The first suspect was described as a white man, around 5ft 7ins to 5ft 8ins tall, slim, aged in his 20s and wearing a hat and mask. The second suspect was also a white man, around 5ft 6ins tall, of slim build and wearing a hat and mask.

Work is well under way on new HQ

WORK is pressing ahead with the construction of a multi-million-pound corporate head office for a major Black Country manufacturing firm.

The structure of Thomas Dudley's new premises is now up at Ionic Park off the Birmingham New Road.

Work is expected to be completed on the three-storey building by August.

The company which produces castings and top quality bathroom fittings was founded in the 1920s by the Dudley family, and is still owned by them nearly 100 years later.

It employs around 350 people, but the company had outgrown its current office block on the Birmingham New Road which dates back to the 1970s.

The new development will include a showroom and training facilities.

Wordsmiths meet at Old Coach House

WORDSMITHS are invited to attend sessions developing their skills. The Coachhouse writers meet on Tuesdays, noon to 1.30pm, at the Old Coach House in Oldswinford. The next session is on January 27.

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Former staff help revive service for elderly



Springboard party may not be the last

ACTIVITY sessions for the elderly in Dudley have been saved thanks to former bosses ploughing their own money into a new venture.

The generous move follows the closure of a popular Age UK centre, which left hundreds of elderly residents from across Dudley without a place to go after it said farewell with a big Christmas party.

The Springboard Activity Centre in Brierley Hill was axed last month after funding was pulled by the Big Lottery and Dudley Council.

Now former employee Sandy Jones

has set up 'Bounce Back...to health & happiness' - with her own money.

A variety of activities, courses, trips and social events for people aged 50 and over in the Black Country will be on offer four days a week at the same prices as before - £2.50 to £5 per session.

Two of the Springboard's redundant staff have set up Bounce Back, which will operate from St Paul's, in Hawsbush Road, and Quarry Bank Community Centre.

Sandy Jones, managing director, said: "Most of the people who at-

tended the old centre are over the moon that we have been able to provide an alternative for them.

"Our oldest person was a hundred years old in the summer and for some of them, we were the only personal contact they had all week."

"I would have been willing to give up my redundancy pay to enable them to avoid loneliness and isolation."

Regular classes started on Monday. For further information on the 'Bounce Back' call 07491 312825 or email bounceback2017@hotmail.com for costs and details.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Councillor steps down from role

A DUDLEY councillor has resigned from her position, citing personal reasons.

Glenis Simms, who represented St Thomas' ward, said she had taken the 'very difficult' decision to stand down.

The 42-year-old made headlines in 2014 when she defected to Labour from the Conservatives.

"Being a councillor has given me a great opportunity to do what I love best, which is to try and help other people who are in need," she said.

The decision will spark a by-election in the ward.

Decision due over school site homes

A FINAL decision on whether a school will be knocked down to make way for a development of homes is expected to be made this week.

Plans to put 27 homes on the site of Holt Farm Primary School in Hale-sowen have been submitted.

The development has been recommended for approval but a decision was put off at the last meeting of Dudley Council's planning committee to allow members to visit the site.

The site has been disused since the primary school shut its doors for the last time in 2006.

80 jobs at risk as firm faces crisis

EIGHTY jobs in West Bromwich are at risk after a £12 million-turnover manufacturer called in administrators.

The administrators were appointed at Colson Castors and Castors International on December 29.

The business has 85 employees with all but five based at the main manufacturing site in Hill Top, West Bromwich. The others are at Christchurch, near Bournemouth. Options for the business are being assessed.

Flat and garages plan at site of abattoir

A FORMER abattoir is to be converted into a flat and garages, if plans are approved.

An application has been submitted to Dudley Council to demolish the former slaughterhouse off Quarry Bank High Street.

The two-bedroom flat will be over three garages, with access off Chapel Street.

The former abattoir has not been used for around 30 years, says nearby workers.

Snowdrops on agenda

ASHWOOD Nurseries near Kinver will be hosting a talk on snowdrops.

Eddie Roberts will give the lecture with a garden tour on February 7.

Tickets are priced at £20 each including refreshments.

Booking is essential by calling (01384) 401996.



Ellie Underhill fell from the bonnet of a car being driven on the car park of Tesco Extra at Burnt Tree

Massive court bill for owner of dirty cafe

THE owner of a filthy cafe in Brierley Hill has been hit with a court bill for more than £2,600.

Wend's Cafe on the Starcrest Industrial Estate was found to have dirty plates, cutlery and surfaces along with crumpling ceilings and no handwash basin in the toilet.

Wolverhampton Magistrates Court heard that Lee Beddall took on the cafe for a less stress-

ful life but soon realised he had made a big mistake.

Beddall, aged 46, of Wollaston Road, Amblecote, pleaded guilty to nine charges of failing to comply with requirements for a food business. He will now have to clean up his cafe, which remains open, before inspectors return for their next visit.

Defence solicitor Mandeep Bassi told the court: "He be-

lieved the cafe would be a less stressful way to earn a living, but now feels it was the worst decision he has ever made. He has tried to make it work and is doing his best. If he could, he would give up the cafe tomorrow, but nobody wants to buy it from him."

Magistrates fined him £1,750 and ordered to pay £800 in court costs and £175 victim surcharge.

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YES, there is a lot of it about. Sniffles, cough, headache and, just when you think you've shaken it off, it comes back again. I couldn't help noticing at a party recently how some of the cheeks one kissed were burning hot. As this winter's dreaded lurgy continues, I foresee a return of Hollywood-style contactless air-kissing. Mwah, mwah, darlings.

WALKING down the street into an oncoming stream of shoppers (including me), a man wearing earphones was holding his laptop in front of him at eye-level and conducting a Skype conversation with somebody, at full volume. This incident proved that communal wishing does not work. Everyone in that street was thinking: "Go on, you idiot, walk into a lampost," but on Christmas merchant missed them all.

AT least the old 19th century houses were easy to take down. I spent one summer as a labourer on the demolition of a huge Regency villa. There was no need to use a demolition ball, nor even a hammer or chisel. We simply lifted every brick by hand. There was no adhesive power in the powdery old mortar and the only thing holding each course of bricks in place was the weight of the bricks above. A bricklayer told me the old buildings remained standing only because all the woodworms were held hands.

TV dramas are filmed months before they are screened. So the makers of *Halcyon* (ITV) must have watched in horror a few weeks ago as *Close to the Enemy* (BBC1) was broadcast.



Note the startling similarities between the two offerings.

Same setting, in a 1940s hotel. Same atmosphere of conspiracy about the reasons for the Second World War.

Same jazz band with sexy chanteuse. And to cap it all, both dramas had the actress Charity Wakefield playing a blonde femme fatale. Both series were about spies. So who's been spying on whom...?

Families have been 'illegally' scattering ashes of their loved ones in gardens of remembrance to avoid paying the £51 charge.

Council bosses revealed they had seen an increase in people going into the memorial gardens at Gornal Wood and Stourbridge Crematoriums and scattering ashes, which is not allowed.

Families can pay to witness cremated remains of relatives being scattered in the gardens but it is thought some are taking it on themselves as they believe the cost is too steep.

It has led to fears families are being priced out of services as it was also revealed some were turning down the opportunity to witness burials of their relatives' ashes, with the cost again thought to be the reason.

Freeze

Council chiefs have even admitted the £51 charge is 'very high' and have decided to freeze it for 2017.

Other bereavement fees have increased but council bosses have become concerned with the growing trend of people scattering ashes.

A council report said: "The fee currently is very high and is deterring people from being present at the time of their loved ones' burials and interments into the columbarium niches."

"We are also seeing an increase in illegal scattering of cremated remains in our gardens of remembrance, which is potentially due to people not wishing to pay the witness fee and so they scatter the remains themselves. Further increases could see more instances of this occurring and so a freeze on this fee is recommended."

Councillor Khurshid Ahmed said: "We always strongly recommend people do not scatter ashes there. For future generations there won't be any records of where their relative was laid to rest."

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Company's moulding division is on the move

DUDLEY'S growing and ambitious Petford Group has bought a new site in Lye to house its moulding division in a new factory.

Managing director Mel Sinar said that the business, which is one of the country's leading tool makers and injection moulders, was investing £1.5 million in the new project.

The purchase of the four-acre site of a former Controlled Heat Treatments works in Mears Coppice was completed just before the group shut for Christmas.

Mr Sinar said that the move of the moulding division to its new home would also mean the creation of 15 new jobs.

"We plan to start building in the new year and hopefully move in in August," he added.

He said the extra space was needed due to the continued growth and expansion of the company and would enable Petford to continue supporting its customers and further grow order books.

A new 38,000 sq ft facility is to be built on the former CHT site and the fresh investment follows £8m that was invested in 2016 to support growth.

The group currently employs 130 between its head office in Peartree Lane and its other site in Station Drive, Brierley Hill, which currently houses its moulding operation.

The manufacturer, which was formed in 1970, will continue to carry out automotive tool manufacturing at its current site.

Boardrooms need more women – MP

STOURBRIDGE MP Margot James says the Government supports calls to increase the number of women in the boardrooms at blue chip companies.

Ms James, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, said the Government wants to see female representation on the boards at FTSE 350 firms hit 33 per cent by 2020.

In Parliament business questions the Conservative MP said: "The proportion of women on FTSE 100 boards has increased from 12.5 per cent in 2011 to 27 per cent.

"Since 2011, the number of women on FTSE 350 boards has more than doubled to 23.5 per cent.

"We support the business-led target of 33 per cent of those on FTSE 350 boards being women by 2020."

Concern as cars are targeted by vandals

CARS have been targeted by vandals in Wordsley in recent weeks.

Windows have been smashed and wing mirrors broken as yobs caused damage in the Lawnswood Road area. The vandalism has been reported to the police.

Dahlia for Duncan is a blooming marvel



Manchester United fan Lee Jackson with his Hillcrest Duncan Edwards dahlias



Work is under way on the centre

Families are breaking rules to scatter ashes

By Richard Guttridge

FAMILIES have been 'illegally' scattering ashes of their loved ones in gardens of remembrance to avoid paying the £51 charge.

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Council chiefs have even admitted the £51 charge is 'very high' and have decided to freeze it for 2017.

Other bereavement fees have increased but council bosses have become concerned with the growing trend of people scattering ashes.

A council report said: "The fee currently is very high and is deterring people from being present at the time of their loved ones' burials and interments into the columbarium niches."

"We are also seeing an increase in illegal scattering of cremated remains in our gardens of remembrance, which is potentially due to people not wishing to pay the witness fee and so they scatter the remains themselves. Further increases could see more instances of this occurring and so a freeze on this fee is recommended."

Councillor Khurshid Ahmed said: "We always strongly recommend people do not scatter ashes there. For future generations there won't be any records of where their relative was laid to rest."

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Towpaths in line for a £125,000 makeover

A STRETCH of canal will undergo £125,000 worth of improvements in the latest part of a scheme to transform towpaths.

A section running from Seven Dwellings Bridge to Black Delph Bridge in Brierley Hill is next in line for a towpath makeover.

Canals have been spruced up across the Dudley borough as part of a £1.7 million revamp aimed at encouraging more people to walk and cycle along them.

Work has been taking place this year on a £460,000 project between Kinver Street Basin in Wordsley and Buckpool Nature Reserve and The Dell Stadium area in Pensnett.

It also follows improvements on the towpaths in Stourbridge near the Bonded Warehouse.

Dudley Council has now secured an extra £180,000 from the Government's Local Growth Fund to work on the next stretch of canal, as part of a drive to get more people using the paths.

The area running to Brierley Hill is part of a National Cycle Network route and health chiefs are keen to make the waterside walkways more inviting. The council has put £1.34m towards the overall scheme.

Chiefs said they had seen more people using the paths since the project began.

The latest stage of the work has been authorised by Councillor Hilary Bills, cabinet member for environmental services, in a move to encourage even more people to walk or cycle.

Safety advice is offered to elderly

SUPPORT is available to help older residents live well and feel safe in their homes across the borough.

Dudley Council has teamed up with Age UK Dudley, West Midlands Police, Victim Support and West Midlands Fire Service to offer practical safety, security and wellbeing advice to residents in their own home.

An officer from the partnership visits residents to give advice on a range of issues. They get the appropriate services to contact the person to offer help. The scheme includes providing home and personal alarms, sheltered and supported housing options, falls support and advice, home improvement help and adaptations, handyman service and fire safety advice. Call (01384) 817743.

Cut-price boat trips into caverns

DUDLEY Canal Trust is discounting its 45-minute boat trips into the limestone caverns under the town from Monday. Trips from The Portal at Birmingham New Road cost £3 from 10.30am to 3pm. Call 0121 557 6265.

Drug addict went on a wrecking spree

A DRUG addict who smashed up four fruit machines after breaking into a pub – before going on to break into a nearby factory unit just weeks later – has been given a six-month community order.

Alexander McDonald, aged 28, of Lye, broke into The Chequers Inn, a Wetherspoon pub in Stourbridge town centre, on September 27.

Then on November 13, he smashed a window and climbed into the Customark factory unit on the Hayes trading estate, Lye.

He pleaded guilty to both burglaries at Dudley magistrates' court.

Mrs Maxine Jarrousse-Jones, prosecuting, said: "Two males broke into the pub via a fire exit. They went to four gambling machines and smashed them

until they were destroyed and the cash was taken out. It is not known the amount of cash that was taken due to the machines being emptied regularly. The glass panel in the doors cost about £200 to repair. The gaming company said that the machines cost about £6,000."

"When interviewed about the incident he said he could not remember what he was doing on that day in question."

"The other matter was the incident at the Customark factory unit in Lye where McDonald gained entry to a rear window and forced the metal bars behind it. He said he had entered the premises to find items to sell to fund his drug addiction."

Patrick Currie, defending, said: "He had been

in a stable relationship and things were going well until it collapsed and as a result of that he found it difficult to cope and became very depressed and returned to his old drug habit."

"He accepts that he committed both offences, but it was at a time when he was involved in drugs and at a low."

McDonald had previous convictions for burglary dating from 2010.

He was given a six-month community order and told to pay £500 towards compensation. He also has to pay £185 in costs and £85 victim surcharge fee.

He also pleaded guilty to using a vehicle without insurance and was given six penalty points on his licence and told to pay £100.

NEWS IN BRIEF

'Good' report for pre-school

A PRE-SCHOOL has been praised following an inspection by Ofsted.

Wordsley Pre-School and Playgroup retained its rating of 'good' following the most recent visit from the education regulator.

Inspectors were impressed with teaching and said children and parents were happy with the pre-school in Brierley Hill Road, Wordsley.

It was rated as 'good' across the board, with the inspection taking into account quality of leadership and teaching, and the development and behaviour of the children who attend.

Speed checks find dozens break limit

POLICE speed checks caught 41 drivers breaking the speed limit in one morning.

Officers carried out the survey on Thorns Road, in Quarry Bank, which has a 30mph limit. The excessive speeds recorded on a recent Thursday ranged from 37mph to 55mph.

Councillor Nicholas Barlow said: "People should be obeying the speed limit. To be doing speeds from 35mph to 50mph is absolutely crazy."

"It's a shame we haven't got the speed cameras in operation down there permanently."

Festive tickets boost hospice

A £3 million fundraising drive to re-vamp the day services unit at Mary Stevens Hospice has received a boost of nearly £50,000 thanks to the sale of Christmas lottery tickets.

The hospice's annual Candy Cane Christmas Draw has raised the bumper sum which will help the charity to continue providing vital care for families across Dudley borough.

A total of 49,554 tickets were bought for £1 each, which is an increase of 4,766 on last year's draw.

Logistics company supports charity day

A LOGISTICS firm showed its backing for the Alzheimer's Society with a big donation to mark Elf Day.

Lee Allen, service manager for the society, dressed as an elf for the national fundraising Elf Day last month.

He was charged with getting as many 'elfie' selfies on the day to raise awareness of the Alzheimer's Society. His last stop was at JJJX Logistics on Pensnett Trading Estate where he collected £3,000 donated by the transport firm.

Arrest over kitten theft

A KITTEN stolen in a burglary in Lower Gornal but has been found and returned to its owners. According to police, no other items were taken during the break-in at a property on Central Drive on December 23. A 31-year-old man has been arrested on suspicion of burglary and bailed.

Traders' brochure listing will cost more

TRADESPeOPLE will have to either pay two thirds more in fees, or be taken off a list of council recommended businesses.

Dudley Council chiefs have authorised increasing charges for traders to be listed in the existing Fix-A-Home booklet, published through Dudley Trading Standards and Age UK Dudley, to help residents find reliable builders, plumbers, electricians and more.

From January 1, the annual charge for inclusion in the list has risen from £90 to £150.

The list currently has 120 vetted and selected members in 19 business categories.

The Fix-A-Home scheme has been generating an income of around £10,800 every year, all of which goes to Age UK.

However as a result of rising costs, it has also been decided to change the set-up so that the council's Trading Standards team are fully responsible for printing and posting of the booklets, and will receive most of the income.

Age UK Dudley will still be involved in promoting the booklet, but will receive a set income of £4,000.

Network

The scheme has been running in Dudley since February 2000 and was accredited by the Local Authority Assured Traders Scheme Network in November 2006.

At the moment traders pay £90 annually to be listed in one category in the Fix-A-Home booklet, and can be included in a second category if they pay an additional £20.

From the start of this month they need to pay £150 to be in one category and an extra £35 to be in two. Moreover, if they wait until April 2018 they will have to pay double of what it costs now to be included, at £180. The second listing charge will remain at £35.

The council's decision notice states: "It was considered that a doubling of the fee straight away would be unwelcome for the existing traders so by covering 15 months and stepping up the fee after the first year may encourage more traders to stay with the scheme."

The decision was authorised by Councillor Rachel Harris, who said: "Our scheme is still a lot cheaper than others. It is an important service which many residents rely on. It gives them peace of mind to know people doing work to their homes have gone through the council and trading standards."

Perry takes fridge up a mountain



Perry Ware, of Dudley, carried a fridge up Snowdon to raise money for the hospital that saved his grand-daughter reaching the base camp at Everest in the Himalayas.

He has now raised more than £2,500 for the hospital, which saved his grand-daughter's life.

Ava-Mae only weighed 600 grams when she was born and spent the first 12 months of her life in the hospital.

The seven-hour journey up Snowdon in September left 55-year-old Mr Ware with back and chest pains but he said he

would 'do it again, tomorrow, if he could'.

"The wind kept blowing me from side to side. It wasn't too bad getting up because I could lean forward and put the weight on my back, it was more of a problem on the way down as I had a lot of extra weight on my legs."

He added: "The pain is all well worth it really and I'd do it again if I could."

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Brexit – the people have spoken, so listen

RE: Brexit. A few weeks ago I read that a survey of readers had shown that were the EU referendum to be repeated the result obtained last summer might not be repeated.

Since the referendum, the media has been full of demands that the Government rush to make clear its negotiating position and that Brexit will, in one way or another, be disadvantageous to this country.

I voted 'remain' since I thought that either the vote would be overwhelmingly in favour of the 'status quo', or that the leave majority would be tiny.

What the media has termed a 'hard' Brexit is, in fact, the only form of de-

Instead, there was a massive vote in favour of an exit from the EU. The nationwide majority of four per cent can leave no one in doubt that the prevailing opinion is that the people of this country consider that a better future can be had if we are able to: control our borders, decide nationally how tax revenues are to be spent, have Parliament legislate, and make our own trade deals with Commonwealth members, China, the United States, and other trading partners.

The people were asked; the people have answered. There is nothing further to be said about the legitimacy of the vote. Look to what may be required as this nation moves towards resurgence and redemption, and hone those skills that led to great success before the EU.

LIONEL H WESTON
Stourbridge

Scrooge would be de-lighted

CONGRATULATIONS
Dudley council on the display of the Christmas light in the town. No, that is not a typing error – with the 'display' running to a whole three strings across the road, the effort was nothing short of pathetic.

The Christmas tree which normally takes pride of place in the market in the town centre was pushed out to the edge of town to stand in the rarely used square outside the museum (sorry, new flats development), and the space rented out to the operator of a children's merry-go-round.

The extensive display was eventually begrudgingly switched on on December 10, a whole two weeks before Christmas. Oh, how you spoil us.

This year it was possible to stand in the town centre and not see anything to suggest that it was Christmas.

Dudley Council, Scrooge is proud of you.

R MASON
Tividale

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST

Dudley Chronicle,
Chronicle Editorial,
51-53 Queen Street
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

EMAIL

dudley.chrons@expressandstar.co.uk

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

Sit-and-wait best system at the GP's

HERE we go again. Appointments at GP surgeries are nearing breaking point, patients are having to wait weeks for an appointment and all the alleged experts, professionals and highly overpaid executives still cannot see the wood for the trees.

There are only a certain amount of appointments that can be made in any one day and therefore this can only end with a bottleneck of people waiting for a slot but this can be reduced dramatically if only our experts, professionals and highly overpaid executives realise not all changes are for the better. So I say return to the days when patients could see a doctor when ill, and did not overload the over-stressed system. Of course, I refer to the sit-and-wait system.

The most I ever had to wait was 30 minutes and not as it is now, practically 30 days! This would reduce the queues at our A&E departments and eventually ease the life of our overworked GPs.

I fear little will change purely because those that make these changes are too afraid to admit their mistakes and will never be using the system, like us mere mortals.

PETE LOWE
Brierley Hill

Hospital's car park too costly

RE Russells Hall Hospital. I had the misfortune to be admitted to hospital over the Xmas period with respiratory problems. This wonderful hospital with its dedicated staff looked after me and reassured me. Even though it took six hours before I was admitted to the Emergency Assessment Ward, I was never left alone for more than an hour.

These lovely people (ie skeleton staff) did wonders, nothing was too much trouble. This was my choice of hospital, it is a beautiful place and spotlessly clean.

The only downfall is parking and its charges. My daughter had to pay £10 for two visits, one with items I needed and one to take me home. Their charges are outrageous and should be sorted.

But thank you to all who looked after me. I am home now with a district nurse calling, so thanks again, and God bless you all.

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Drunk youth halted car to punch a motorist

A DRUNK teenager beat up a stranger after forcing the motorist to a standstill by running half naked into the road, a judge heard.

Trouble flared after Shaun Cotton downed eight pints and two vodkas at a family party, Wolverhampton Crown Court was told. The 18-year-old had been upset by comments made about his late grandmother and hit out 'in frustration', it was claimed.

He dashed into Ashleigh Road, Tividale, during the evening of September 17 and attacked 66-year-old Raymond Saunders after the driver was brought to a halt.

Mr John Brotherton, prosecuting, said: "The defendant was screaming and not wearing a top when he appeared in front of the vehicle."

Fractured

Cotton banged on the driver's door and punched the victim in the face when it was opened. He then tried to pull the stunned motorist out of the car but was prevented by the seat belt. Cotton punched the victim in the face a second time before running away.

The victim, who was left with a bloody nose and other injuries, drove home before going to hospital where it was discovered that he had a fractured cheekbone.

The defendant maintained he had delivered a single blow but his barrister, Mr Will Rose, said:

By John Scott

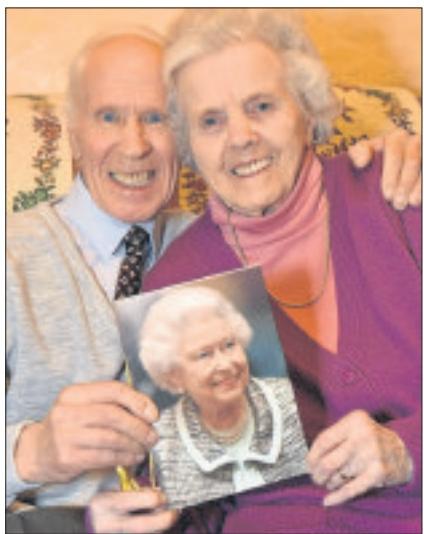
"Whether there was one or two punches, thankfully the incident was over in a matter of seconds. This young man has never been in trouble before and accepts that he had too much to drink at the party."

"During the evening he overheard comments made about his grandmother, with whom he had been very close. He took out his frustration on somebody who had nothing to do with the matter."

Cotton, of Tower Road, Tividale, pleaded guilty to causing grievous bodily harm and was given 51 weeks detention in a Young Offenders Institution, suspended for two years.

He was also ordered to complete 240 hours of unpaid work and pay £250 compensation.

Chance meeting led to 60 happy years



Diamond couple Charles and Maureen Poultnay, of Brierley Hill, with their congratulations from the Queen

A CHANCE meeting on a work's outing to Blackpool led to 60 years of wedded bliss for one diamond couple.

Charles and Maureen Poultnay, of Kerry Close, Brierley Hill, married on December 22, 1956, at Wordsley Church.

But if it hadn't been for Maureen going on her aunt's work's trip to Blackpool two years before - they may never have met.

"In the summer of 1954 Charles was working at Lewis Springs in Cleveland Street, Dudley, as a tool setter," said Maureen.

"I had an aunt who was working there too and she could take someone with her for their annual outing to Blackpool, so I went along."

"Charles and I got talking to each other and we hit it off. I was working as a nurse at Wordsley Hospital at the time."

The happy couple enjoyed spending time at Dudley Hippodrome, which has recently been saved by campaigners.

They have two children - Tina, aged 56, and Douglas, 48 - along with three grandchildren - James, 24, Matthew, 23, and Sophie, 17.

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Schools are facing crisis retaining headteachers

DUDLEY Council admits it is struggling to retain headteachers in its schools after new research revealed the full extent of the town's recruitment crisis.

In the last five years, 30 schools in Dudley got through two headteachers, 12 have had three heads, while two even needed four heads.

A council spokesman said: "We have a poor response for headship appointments and most schools have to re-advertise a second time."

Councillor Patrick Harley, the opposition Tory leader on Dudley Council, has accused the authority of accepting failure in its efforts to appoint school principals.

He has called for an internal investigation in a bid to improve headteacher retention.

"Headteachers are the captains of our schools and when they get it right, our schools improve and meet the needs of the young people in Dudley.

"I appreciate that attracting the best people for head positions is no easy task due to the high amount of competition."

Concerning

"However, it is extremely concerning that the current administration appears to be wringing their hands and saying there is nothing they can do to improve the situation."

"It is no good saying 'oh, we've had a poor response' and just trying to muddle on. It is precisely that attitude that leads to a decline in standards."

"We have some excellent headteachers in Dudley, particularly in academies, but those schools that are changing heads two or three times every few years will suffer as a result."

"The council needs to take an urgent look at its internal processes."

But Martin Lynch, a spokesman



Councillor Patrick Harley has accused Dudley Council of accepting failure for the National Union of Teachers in Dudley, said the expectations on headteachers to hit ever higher targets was turning people away from the job. "The main problem is that all too often, headteachers are put in a no-win situation. The requirements and pressures are ratcheted up year on year as Ofsted continues to raise the bar.

"Quite simply, it can be the end of your career if your school does not hit the mark, so perhaps we should not be surprised if people are not exactly queuing up to do the job. People are less likely to be attracted to the role of headteacher as it becomes more and more stressful," he explained.

Councillor Ian Cooper, cabinet member for children's services, said the authority was doing it could to support governing bodies to recruit 'great leaders'.

He also cited the work of the School Improvement Alliance, which the council set up as part of a strategy to improve standards in Dudley's schools.

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Curtain-up on plans for Hippodrome after rescue

EXCITING plans for the Dudley Hippodrome, which has been saved by campaigners, have been revealed.

Proposals for the building on Castle Hill have now been outlined after the keys for the theatre were passed over from Dudley Council to campaigners The Black Country Hippodrome group.

Members are now working with architects on finalising the proposals which include a three-storey extension.

The group must raise around £5 million to ensure all plans can go ahead and work can begin to re-open the building.

The plans were shown during the key handover just before Christmas, marking exactly 78 years since the day the theatre was first opened.

Modernised

The new proposals show a modernised building with a large three-storey extension to the right on the building, next to Trindle Road. A small building at the site would be demolished to make way for the extension.

Large windows on the front of the building will be installed, new signs erected and more space will be created to the front of the building giving it an 'open feel'.

The plans state that the campaigners hope to change the public perception of the building from 'an eyesore to an asset'.

Proposals show potential extra space for local arts groups, spacious seating and a renovated theatre bar which will also host small music events.

A first floor bar and restaurant is also mentioned in the plans as 'providing meals and lunches'.

A stalls refurbishment would include comfortable seats and new stairs



A first glimpse of how The Black Country Hippodrome could look by 2020



An artist's impression of inside the Hippodrome after the £5m overhaul and lifts will also be created for better wheelchair access.

It is hoped that the building, which a year ago faced demolition to make way for a public open space, will reopen and start hosting events again by 2020, under its new name The Black Country Hippodrome.

The campaign group has been handed a five-year lease and has now

launched its drive to refurbish the largely derelict building.

The theatre opened in 1938 and played host to such stars as Tommy Cooper, Max Miller and Laurel & Hardy in its heyday, but closed as a theatre in 1964. It was a bingo hall for many years until it closed its doors in 2009. It has remained empty ever since.

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Heartache of families told by council to leave high-rise homes

THE heartbroken final tenants of 1960s-built flats in Netherton earmarked for demolition have hit out at being 'cruelly' forced out of their homes.

Dudley Council is speeding up the process of moving residents out of Arley, Compton, Manor and Wells Courts because of fears over the crumbling state of the high rise blocks and cost of repairs.

A total of 192 residents in Arley, Compton, Manor and Wells Courts are to be given clearance priority, taking effect from this month, which mean they will go to the top of the housing list.

Many have already been moved out with the majority of the flats now empty. Those who remain are defiant with some saying they will not be moved.

Steve and Jackie Jinks have lived in Compton Court for 41 years. Mrs Jinks, 64, said: "It is cruel what they are doing. This is our home. We have memories here and all our belongings here. I'm not going to lose all that for anybody, so they can try and move us out in 12 months but I'm not going anywhere."

Her 63-year-old husband is chairman of the Com-

ton and Arley Tenant Housing Association and said: "These flats are relatively large and the properties they are offering are much smaller."

Butcher Paul Shearwood, 58, who has lived in Wells Court for the past 11 years, said he wants to remain close to his workplace less than a mile away at New Road.

"I'm not moving out of Netherton," he said. "If it's going to cost me more to go to work I'm not going to pay for the extra cost."

Councillor Elaine Taylor, who serves Netherton, Woodside and St Andrew's ward, said: "It is being speeded up because there are lots of problems with the maintenance of the buildings and repairs that need doing."

A public notice stated the tower block would be demolished by December 18, 2023, but the council is looking to rehome everyone this year.

Chiefs said they can no longer sustain the buildings because they require more than £9 million in repairs in the short term. The cost of the demolition and compensation will cost the council £3m.



Too expensive to repair – some of the Netherton flats due for demolition

Wedding scam pair admit roles in rip-off

THIS is the double-dealing businesswoman who pocketed over £100,000 while her wedding catering company brought heartbreak to brides throughout the country.

Her husband, Ryan Holt, has pleaded guilty to money laundering.

Lisa Holt was the brains behind the online firm Bake A Cake that let down scores of couples who had paid for slap up meals, wedding cakes, chocolate fountains, DJs, decorations and photo booths that never arrived on their big day.

Several had paid over £1,000 each when they discovered that the Halesowen-based firm had suddenly closed in the summer of 2015.

The mother-of-two has been warned she faces jail after admitting a wedding catering con that cost brides-to-be and companies over £100,000.

Scores of couples had their big day blighted by Lisa Holt's firm. Dudley Trading Standards Department received 150 complaints involving a total of £56,000 worth of broken promises by the company, Wolverhampton Crown Court last week heard that up to 500 more people made similar claims on social media after the business collapsed.



Fraudster Lisa Holt left court on crutches

admitted making a false claim to AXA insurance on August 18, 2016, that a £6,000 hog roast machine had been stolen during a purloined burglary.

Her husband Ryan, of the same age and address, pleaded guilty to money laundering. He admitted converting criminal property by transferring funds between bank accounts registered to him and his wife.

Mr Mark Jackson, prosecuting for Dudley Council, told the court: "We accept this was a business which started out legitimately, and became fraudulent."

"We do not accept the claim from Mrs Holt that one of the reasons it failed was because of a hate campaign against her by competitors."

She said in her basis of plea 'robbing Peter to pay Paul' while the business was not financially viable'.

The couple were remanded on bail for pre-sentence reports until February 3 when full details of the case are expected to be outlined to the court.

Judge Barry Berlin told them: "These are very serious offences and an immediate custodial sentence is the likely outcome."

Resources

Internet giant Wowcha,

which offers deals by third parties, also fell victim to the fraudster after she lied to it about her firm's resources, falsely claiming to have 16 photo booths and ten staff.

The two sides reached an agreement for her to provide photo booths and chocolate fountains at weddings and parties which Wowcha advertised on its website and paid her a share of the booking fees.

She pocketed up to £46,000 from this arrangement but did not provide the photo booths for 556 people, leaving Wowcha to refund customers. The overall bill could have been as high as £80,000 when their anticipated profit was taken into account.

Holt, 41, of Albert Road, Halesowen – who arrived at court on crutches – pleaded guilty to defrauding Bake A Cake customers between May 1 and August 31 2015 and making false representations to Wowcha on July 15, 2015. She further

Thousands back ban on fireworks

MORE than 3,300 people in the Black Country and Staffordshire have backed a petition calling on the Government to ban the sale of fireworks to the public.

The petition, which has been signed by about 150,000 people across the country, wants only organised displays to be approved to help prevent injuries and protect animals. But in a response, the Government said it had no plans to limit the sale and use of fireworks any further.

In the run-up to the new year celebrations, which saw the sky set alight, there was a rush to sign the petition. Across the region, 560 in Dudley and Wyre Forest backed the campaign with 500 signing, also 198 in Halesowen and Rowley Regis, 180 in Stourbridge and 281 in South Staffordshire.

Despite the thousands of signatures nationwide, the matter will not be debated in Parliament as it was discussed in June. Mike Old, who created the petition, wrote: "Every year people are hurt, burnt, maimed and even lose their lives through accidents involving fireworks. People are terrorised by the misuse of fireworks. Every year animals are hurt and traumatised."

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New homes plan back on the agenda for former baths site

Benefactor's boost for hospice appeal



Halesowen businessman Dave Berry took part in the John O'Groats to Land's End fundraising challenge

THE Mary Stevens Hospice has been surprised by an extra £10,000 donation from a benevolent businessman, who embarked upon a year of fundraising.

Dave Berry decided he would collect the money for 'A Year of Celebrations' to simultaneously commemorate his 80th birthday, the 50th anniversary of his company – Berry's Fuelling Technologies – and the 25th anniversary of the Mary Stevens Hospice.

The Halesowen businessman took part in a John O'Groats to Land's End challenge in August, driving the length of the country and stopping off to collect donations from numerous colleagues and business partners he has worked with since starting his company in 1966.

A devoted fundraiser for the Stourbridge hospice, this latest effort by Dave saw his total collected for the hospice surpass £40,000 and he then decided to make it up to £50,000.

Charlotte Schofield, head of fundraising at the hospice, said: "Dave had already contributed so much to this hospice and our ability to look after people. When he called a meeting with us, we obviously went in already full of gratitude. When he pulled out a cheque for £10,000, we were stunned."

The donation couldn't be better timed, as the hospice has launched its largest fundraising campaign, to secure £3 million to refurbish the day services unit.

Society helping dreams come true

FUNDRAISING efforts of Tipton and Coseley Building Society helped raise more than £3,000 last year for Wolverhampton-based charity Promise Dreams.

Fundraising initiatives included Walk for Dreams, The Tipton Bake Off and The Prudential Ride London-Surrey 100, which collectively helped raise £3,396.

Dan Smith, corporate relationship manager at Promise Dreams, said: "The money raised by the Tipton will go a long way to help us to continue to make dreams come true for some amazing families."

Lee Judson, general manager sales and marketing at the Tipton, added: "I'd like to thank our staff."

A CONTROVERSIAL proposal to build homes on the site of former swimming baths is back on the table – a year after a similar scheme stalled.

People living near the Coseley Baths site have been left in the dark since a Dudley Council application to put 24 homes on the site was lodged last year.

The development failed to progress and it has now emerged the plans had to be amended due to the opposition from residents. A new application is expected to be lodged in the coming weeks.

The 1.5-acre site, on Pear Tree Lane, has been fenced off since the baths were knocked down. They were controversially closed in 2009 despite a hard-fought campaign to keep them open.

Residents and councillors have demanded to know what is happening with the council-owned land.

By Richard Guttridge

Talks of any development went quiet after the application went in and no decision was made on it by council planning bosses – leaving residents questioning whether the homes would be built or not.

The application for eight two-bedroom, 10 three-bedroom and six four-bedroom homes was submitted in December 2015 by Public Sector PLC, which is a private company part owned by Dudley Council.

Months

The application has yet to be re-submitted, meaning even if it finally gets the go-ahead any work on the new homes could be still be months away.

More than 40 people signed a petition against the development, raising a raft of complaints, including that the site being too small for the amount of properties proposed and the potential for a loss of light and privacy to existing homes.

Coseley councillor Melvyn Mottram said he had not heard anything about the future of the site but was hopeful there could be a solution to suit everybody.

He said: "The most important thing is residents are happy with it, as long as it doesn't affect them too much."

Councillor Khurshid Ahmed, cabinet member for planning and economic development, said: "The council received a number of comments from local residents when a planning application was submitted for the former Coseley Baths site last year."

"In response to those comments, the council has worked with the applicant to revise the application to include a new site layout and we expect a revised application to be submitted later this month."

The closure of Coseley Baths sparked a bitter row in the area.

There was widespread opposition to the decision and despite a high-profile campaign to save the facility, the baths were eventually bulldozed.

New Lord Lieutenant appointed

A PROMINENT lawyer has been appointed as the Queen's Lord Lieutenant for the West Midlands.

John Crabtree OBE, assumed the role last week after he was selected by Her Majesty to succeed Paul Sabapathy CBE, who has retired from the post.

The 67-year-old has served as a Deputy Lieutenant for the West Midlands since August 2005 while holding the title of High Sheriff of the region in 2006 and 2007.

Mr Crabtree, who lives near Worcester, said: "I am extremely honoured to have been appointed to this significant role."

"Since 2005, I have been privileged to serve as a Deputy Lieutenant and I now look forward to working with my Deputy Lieutenants representing Her Majesty the Queen in the West Midlands.

"The West Midlands Lieutenancy is the second largest lieutenancy in the country with a population of more than 2.8 million people.

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Homeless helped by legal firm

STAFF at a legal firm in Sedgley decided to help the homeless over the festive period.

Thursfields Solicitors chose to help the charity Hope into Action (Black Country), which provides homes for those who find themselves living on the streets.

Charity bosses say at least 20 people are sleeping rough on the streets of the Black Country at any given time. But there are also many people, known as the 'hidden homeless', who sleep on people's sofas, squat in empty properties or are in the hostel system.

More than 11,500 people are on the waiting list for local authority accommodation in Wolverhampton alone.

Thursfields' staff got together to organise a collection to provide food, clothing and bedding.

Road one-way during works

A ROAD in Gornal will remain one-way until the middle of next month due to roadworks.

Since January 3 there has been no access to Old Park Road in Upper Gornal from the A459 Burton Road. South Staffs Water are carrying out water mains work.

Diversions are in place during the works, due to last until February 12, sending traffic along Burton Road, The Broadway and Wrens Nest Road.

FOCUS ON SEDGLEY & GORNAL AREA

Dormston School is rated 'good' after influx of pupils

A SCHOOL that was told to take on extra pupils from a neighbouring school, despite fears over the move's impact on standards, has been rated 'good' by Ofsted.

The education watchdog said Dormston School in Sedgley was coping well with an influx of pupils from Coseley School, which will close in August.

Ofsted inspectors praised the strong leadership of school leaders for improving Dormston since the last inspection in 2014, when it was rated as 'requiring improvement'.

The latest inspection took place on November 22 and 23. The report on the visit rated Dormston as 'good' across the board and pupils were making 'good progress'. It also said the school's relationship with parents was 'strong'.

Pleased

Headteacher Ben Stichman said: "We are pleased with the report, we think it is an accurate reflection of where the school is at the moment. But we are not going to rest on our laurels - we are going to make sure that we give the children, who attend from the surrounding areas, the best opportunity to succeed in life."

"Leaders have created a positive culture of care and achievement appreciated by pupils and staff," the report continued. "Pupils now make good progress from their different starting points. Pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning. They take pride in their work and the majority behave well at school."

And inspectors said pupils 'particularly' valued the support they received in Key Stage 4 in making decisions about future careers.

There had been fears for Dormston's future when the school was told that it must accept more than 80 pupils from Coseley School.

By Jamie Brassington

a tougher time and we hope we have started to repay their faith."

An inspector said the leadership of the headteacher, senior team and governors has improved.

"Leaders have created a positive culture of care and achievement appreciated by pupils and staff," the report continued. "Pupils now make good progress from their different starting points. Pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning. They take pride in their work and the majority behave well at school."

And inspectors said pupils 'particularly' valued the support they received in Key Stage 4 in making decisions about future careers.

There had been fears for Dormston's future when the school was told that it must accept more than 80 pupils from Coseley School.



Simon Massey with a pint of the award-winning Sarah Hughes Dark Ruby Mild

Traditional dark beer is a winner

BOSSES at a Sedgley pub and brewery are celebrating after hearing that their powerful ale has been named West Midland Champion Beer of the Year.

The Beacon Hotel's six per cent Sarah Hughes Dark Ruby Mild has been given the title by expert judges from the Campaign for Real Ale. The beer, one of the strongest milds in the country, is pulled around 2,000 times a week at the pub on Bilton Street in Sedgley.

Simon Massey, operations manager, said: "It's a great achievement but it's all down to team work, hard work and dedication from the staff at the pub. The owner of the pub, John Hughes, is still very passionate about the business and it's all down to him. He reinstated the brewery in 1987 and it's just gone from strength to strength."

The Beacon brews in its Victorian tower brewery using traditional methods.

Joy over revamp of junction

IMPROVEMENT work is to get under way on an accident blackspot in Sedgley.

The junction of Gospel End Street and Vicar Street has been labelled a 'renowned danger spot' by Councillor Michael Evans.

Now Dudley Council has revealed a revamp of the junction is planned in the next financial year to highlight give way signs and road markings.

Councillor Evans, a representative of Sedgley ward, said: "It will be a diversion to the left which will then make it clear to drivers that they need to stop."

"It really is the most dangerous junction in Sedgley. "We have been talking about this and trying to get something for about four years.

"I will be extremely pleased when the work gets under way, which is hoped to be in the next financial year from April onwards."

Busy Gospel End Road leads to Wodehouse Lane towards Wombourne.

New shop sign wins approval

PLANNERS have given the go-ahead for a new shop sign to be put in place on a Grade II listed building in Sedgley.

The two-storey building on Bilton Street contains Teamsports, a shop selling sportswear, uniforms and trophies.

It is within a terrace of listed buildings dating back to the 1800s and even earlier.



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Wednesday	09.45am....Pilates
	11.00am....Dance-Fit
2pmTone- mix
6pmTrampoline Fitness
6.30pmFitsteps
6.30pmPound
7.15pmFitness Pilates
7.30pmJungle-mix/Konga

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	6.30pmHilt-mix
6.30pmClubbercise
7.45pmBurlex
7.45pmPound

Friday	09.45am....Zumba
	6.30pmZumba

Saturday	09.15am....Hilt-mix
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Sunday	09.30am....Zumba
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Sedgley

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6.30pmBurlex
7.15pmBootcamp
7.30pmGentle Fitness

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	5.45pmClubbercise
6pmHilt-mix
6.40pmJungle-Mix
6.40pmZumba
7.45pmPilates

Wednesday	09.45am....Pound
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Suicide verdict on undertaker

AN UNDERTAKER was found hanged at his home, an inquest heard.

John Paul Woolley, aged 37, from Victoria Road, Cradley Heath, was found by his partner on December 16.

An ambulance had been called to Mr Woolley's house hours before, after his partner suspected that he had taken an overdose. But when crews arrived he was not at home and his car was missing, Black Country Coroner's Court heard.

Police searched the area before returning to the property later to find him hanging.

The court heard how he had suffered from depression but had not sought medical help. The cause of death given was asphyxia due to hanging.

Senior Coroner Zafar Siddique gave a conclusion of suicide. He said: "We heard that his partner was concerned for his welfare and his safety."

"He suffered with depression but no suicide note was found."

Son who claimed carer benefit while working pays money back

A MAN falsely claimed more than £8,000 in carer's allowance for nearly three years while working, a court has heard.

Simon Davis, aged 28, from Cromwell Drive, Dudley, claimed the benefit for looking after his father from May 2010, under the condition that he was caring for him and not in employment.

However, from September 17, 2012, to July 19, 2015, Davis failed to declare he was working at Tower Hire Services Ltd.

He received a total of £8,514.60 that he was not entitled to.

It wasn't until December 2014 that Davis 'questioned' working and claiming, Dudley Mag-

istrates Court heard. He admitted dishonestly failing to notify a change of circumstances affecting entitlement.

Mrs Maxine Jarrousse-Jones, prosecuting, said: "His earnings affected the amount of carer's allowance he was entitled to."

Pressure

"He said he had forgotten what he had originally put on the form and that he had been busy and under pressure looking after his father."

"It was not until Christmas 2014 when he questioned working and claiming. He states that it had 'slipped his mind' but from his bank statements he would have been frequently reminded that he was claiming."

Davis had no previous convictions.

Mr Gary Cook, defending, said: "The money is currently being repaid. His father was involved in a very large traffic incident in the 1960s and he suffered a fracture to his spine. He did not stop work but he had to change his career path. He worked up until 1993 when his back gave way and he collapsed."

"Despite his employment Mr Davis was continuing to provide care to his father around his work hours. He is heavily involved in the day-to-day care of him. He is a hard-working man."

Davis was given a 12-week curfew, from 8pm to 6am, and ordered to pay £135 in court costs.

Robert Ross, chairman of the bench, told Davis: "This is a serious matter that went on for a long time but we are pleased to hear that you are repaying the money."

Men charged over lead thefts

TWO men have been charged with theft after lead flashing was stripped from the rooftops of homes in West Bromwich.

A dog unit and police helicopter were called to Mountbatten Street in the early hours of December 30 and officers discovered lead flashing nearby.

Two men have been charged with theft in relation to the incident. Nathan Hancock, aged 20, and 23-year-old Sean McNamara, both from Birmingham Road, West Bromwich, will appear at Dudley Magistrates Court on Tuesday.

Hancock faces an additional charge of possessing an offensive weapon in public, in the form of a bladed multi-tool gadget.

West Midlands Police has been leading a targeted operation against metal thefts, named Operation Steel. The average number of metal thefts taking place each month has reduced by nearly 83 per cent in four years.

Census is a roaring success



Dudley Zoo keeper Adam Wrench ensures that the lion's share of the census is carried out at the popular attraction on Castle Hill

THE animals went in two by two at Dudley Zoo as bosses started their annual census. With more than 1,500 animals at the Castle Hill site it is no easy task for the staff who have just a week to complete their count.

And while it might be simple to record the number of meerkats and larger animals, like giraffes, it can drive workers batty trying to count all the short-tailed bats which call the zoo their home.

Curator Richard Brown said: "It's easy to count our four Bornean orangutans, three Sumatran tigers or one Asiatic black bear."

"But it's trickier to count heads in penguin bay, which is home to more than 80 individual Humboldt penguins, or making sure we've got the right number of Egyptian and Seba's short-tailed bats."

The yearly task is part of the licensing

requirements of all UK zoos and wildlife parks and involves keepers having to tot up all mammals, invertebrates, birds, amphibians and reptiles in their care.

Keepers in Dudley have a week to complete the census before delivering the results to DZG's registrar and research co-ordinator, Dr David Beeston, who collates and inputs the data into the zoo's official records.

Dr Beeston said: "As keepers work with the same animals day in, day out this is really just a confirmation exercise. But we have lots of new arrivals being counted for the first time this year from births on site or animals being brought in from other collections including 20 flamingos, 23 rainbow lorikeets, one snow leopard, one giant anteater, one gelada baboon, two ring-tailed lemurs and six pygmy marmosets."

Sight charity in plea for unwanted gifts

PARENTS having a post-Christmas clear out of their children's toys and games are being urged to donate them to the area's leading sight loss charity, the Beacon Centre.

The Sedgley-based charity is appealing for donations which can be dropped off at any of its seven stores across the Black Country and Staffordshire.

As well as toys, the charity will also accept unwanted gifts, particularly toiletries, as well as clothes.

Beacon Centre head of enterprise operations Tracey Ford said: "Donating good quality clothes, toys and homeware to the Beacon Centre helps us support people living with sight loss in communities around the region."

"If you have any unwanted gifts, rather than let them sit in a drawer why not donate them and make a difference to someone living with sight loss."

You can find details of the Beacon Centre's seven stores on website www.beaconvision.org/find-your-local-shop

Slip roads in night closures

SLIP roads at Junction 2 of the M5 in the Black Country will be closed overnight for more than three months, meaning long detours.

Traffic will not be able to get on or off the motorway at Birchley Island, in Oldbury, from Monday (January 16) to May 1 between 9pm and 6am, once the closures come into force.

Northbound and southbound sides will be affected meaning motorists accessing the M5 during the night will have to head to junctions near Halesowen or West Bromwich.

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Excursions - Evening meal - Breakfast, Free drink

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Excursions - Evening meal - Breakfast, Entertainment, Free hot drinks on coach

LIFRACOMBE - IMPERIAL HOTEL - Monday 10th - Friday 14th April 2017 5 DAYS

Excursions - Half-board. Esse-suite room with tea/coffee, Entertainment, Lift, Free hot drinks on coach

ST IVES - COATAGE HOTEL NEW Wednesday 1st - Sunday 5th April 2017 5 DAYS

Excursions - Half-board. Esse-suite room with tea/coffee, Entertainment (Around the theme of Culinary), Activities throughout the week, Room upgrade £30 p. Free hot drinks on coach

WEYMOUTH - FAIRHAVEN HOTEL Easter Week Monday 17th - Friday 21st April 2017 5 DAYS

Excursions - Half board. Esse-suite room with tea/coffee, Entertainment, Lift, Free hot drinks on coach

PADINGTON - HOTEL BOYNE ESTATE HOTEL Monday 17th - Friday 21st April 2017 5 DAYS

Excursions - Half board. Home cooking. Esse-suite room with TV, tea/coffee, Entertainment, Lift, Free hot drinks on coach

MYSTERY WEEKEND - WHERE WILL WE BE? SOLD OUT Saturday 22nd - Sunday 23rd April 2017 2 DAYS

Excursions - Evening meal - Breakfast, Entertainment, Free hot drinks on coach

TORQUAY - NEWMAR HOTEL Monday 10th - Friday 13th May 2017 4 DAYS

Excursions - Half-board. Esse-suite room (many with sea-view), Entertainment, Happy Hour 6.30pm - 8.30pm, Free hot drinks on coach

EXMOUTH - CLARENCE HOTEL Monday 10th - Friday 13th May 2017 4 DAYS

Excursions - Evening meal - Breakfast, Entertainment, Happy Hour 6.30pm - 8.30pm, Free hot drinks on coach

WEYMOUTH - FAIRHAVEN HOTEL Monday 10th - Friday 13th May 2017 4 DAYS

Excursions - Half-board. Esse-suite room with TV, tea/coffee, Entertainment, Lift, Free hot drinks on coach

LYTHAM ST ANNES - LINDUM HOTEL Monday 10th - Friday 13th May 2017 4 DAYS

Excursions - Half-board. Esse-suite room with TV, tea/coffee, Lift - Entertainment, Free hot drinks on coach

SKEGNESS - SAVOY HOTEL Monday 10th - Friday 13th May 2017 4 DAYS

Excursions - Half-board - home cooked food. Esse-suite room with TV, tea/coffee, Entertainment, Free hot drinks on coach

BABACOMBE - HOTEL DE LA MER Monday 10th - Sunday 21st May 2017 4 DAYS

Excursions - Half board. Esse-suite room with TV, tea/coffee, Entertainment, Lift, Free hot drinks on coach

MORECAMBE & THE LAKES - AUCKLAND HOTEL Monday 23rd - Friday 26th May 2017 4 DAYS

Excursions - Half-board (home cooking). Esse-suite room with TV, tea/coffee, Entertainment and dancing, Lift, Free hot drinks on coach

MYSTERY WEEKEND - WHERE WILL WE BE? HOTEL Saturday 27th - Sunday 28th May 2017 2 DAYS

Excursions - Evening meal - Breakfast, Entertainment, Free hot drinks on coach

BOURNEMOUTH - DUNSTER HOTEL Monday 28th - Friday 1st June 2017 4 DAYS

Excursions - Half board. Esse-suite room with TV, tea/coffee, Entertainment, Lift, Free hot drinks on coach

LYTHAM ST ANNES - LINDUM HOTEL Monday 28th - Friday 1st June 2017 4 DAYS

Excursions - Half-board. Esse-suite room with TV, tea/coffee, Lift - Entertainment, Free hot drinks on coach

ISLE OF WIGHT - THE TROVILLIE HOTEL - DUNSTON Saturday 29th Mar - Sunday 4th June 2017 6 DAYS

Excursions - Ferry crossing, Half-board (sea-view restaurant). Esse-suite room with TV, tea/coffee, Many rooms with sea-view, Ballroom and Entertainment, Lift, trim-gym & indoor pool. Free hot drinks on coach

PAINGTON - HOTEL BOYNE ESTATE HOTEL Saturday 29th Mar - Sunday 4th June 2017 6 DAYS

Excursions - Half board. Esse-suite room with TV, tea/coffee, Entertainment, Lift, Free hot drinks on coach

EASTBOURNE - THE HADLEIGH HOTEL Monday 9th - Friday 13th July 2017 5 DAYS

Excursions - Half-board. Esse-suite room with TV, tea/coffee, Entertainment, Lift, Free hot drinks on coach

WESTON-SUPER-MARE - SANDRINGHAM HOTEL Monday 10th - Friday 13th June 2017 5 DAYS

Excursions - Half-board. Esse-suite room with tea/coffee, Entertainment, Lift, Games Room, Free hot drinks on coach

First-time home buyers 'short-changed' says MP

THE West Midlands has been 'short-changed' by the Government over funding to help first-time buyers get a foot on the housing ladder, says Dudley North MP Ian Austin.

The Government is injecting £60 million a year in areas where residents looking to buy their first home are crowded out of the market by second home owners.

But the West Midlands will see just £1.9m of the money when it is released, with the South West alone receiving more than 10 times that amount having been allocated almost £20m.

Other areas of the country that will see more cash than the West Midlands include the South East, which will get £11m, the East of England will have almost £9m, Yorkshire and Humberside will receive £6m, and the North West has been allocated almost £6m.

Labour MP Mr Austin said he would be asking questions to find out why the West Midlands will receive just £1.9m.

"Here we go again. It looks like the West Midlands is being short-changed by the Government once more," he said.

Cutbacks

"Council cutbacks are hitting us harder than wealthier areas in the south and we got precious little of the extra funds made available to help councils or prevent pharmacies from shutting recently."

"Every week I talk to people in Dudley desperate to get a home of their own, so I'll be tabling questions to find out which councils applied and why they missed out. But it very much looks as though the Government is once again favouring their friends in the south."

Housing Minister Gavin Barwell said the cash would be channelled to groups providing affordable housing. They had particularly helped the South West because much of the housing stock in that region was swallowed up by second home owners.

Robin rocking to its 25th



The Robin 2 today, formerly Bilton Drill Hall, in Mount Pleasant, Bilton, and now one of the top music venues in the region

ONE of the Black Country's top live music venues celebrates its quarter century in April.

The original Robin R'n'B Club opened on April 9, 1992, at its original home at the old Robin Hood Inn at Merry Hill, Brierley Hill. The club is now the Robin 2 in Mount Pleasant, Bilton, and continues to be run by founder Mike Hamblett.

The former Sub Zero drummer created the club, specialising in blues, soul and rock in the former Citizen's Theatre at the pub. He opened the 700-capacity club in the former drill hall in Bilton in 1998 and the two sites ran together until the original club closed in 2003 as Merry Hill shopping centre expanded its car parks.

The 25th anniversary of the first Robin show will see The Muffin Men, a group made up of former Frank Zappa musicians, performing on April 9.

The Robin 2 now includes its own hotel as well as Noddy's Bar, named after original Slade singer and guitarist Noddy Holder, who helped launch the venue. The club's opening night in 1992 saw 200 turned away because it was a sellout.



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\$269 MYSTERY WEEKEND - WHERE WILL WE BE? HOTEL Sunday 1th - Sunday 13th October 2017 2 DAYS

Excursions - Evening meal - Breakfast, Entertainment, Free hot drinks on coach

\$279 BLACKPOOL ILLUMINATIONS - CAR-BRAE HOTEL Monday 16th - Friday 20th October 2017 5 DAYS

Excursions - (one of the lights). Half-board with choice of meals (Home cooking). Esse-suite room with tv, tea/coffee, Entertainment, Lift, Free hot drinks on coach

\$299 BLACKPOOL ILLUMINATIONS - CAR-BRAE HOTEL Saturday 21st - Monday 23rd October 2017 3 DAYS

Excursions - (one of the lights). Half-board with choice of meals (Home cooking). Esse-suite room with tv, tea/coffee, Entertainment, Lift, Free hot drinks on coach

\$349 LONDON - 5 STAR WALDORF HOTEL*** - TREAT YOURSELF! Sunday 22nd - Sunday 29th October 2017 2 DAYS

Drop-off at Harrods for shopping. Esse-suite rooms - Breakfast, Free time in London. Free hot drinks on coach

\$350 WARDENS - BODENHEAD CASTLE NEST Monday 23rd - Friday 27th October 2017 5 DAYS

Excursions - Half-board - Sunday evening. Esse-suite room in castle. Variety Live, Great Comedy, Vocalists, Live Music, & more - Entertainment - Activities during week, Room upgrade £30 p. Free hot drinks on coach

\$353 PAGINTON - HOTEL RONAI ESPALANADE TURKEY & TISSEL Monday 23rd - Friday 7th October 2017 5 DAYS

Excursions - Half board. Home cooking. Esse-suite room with TV, tea/coffee, Entertainment - Lift - Turkey & Tisell Festivities, Free hot drinks on coach, Balcony room supp £3 p per night

\$315 TORQUAY - NEWMAR HOTEL Friday 3rd - Sunday 7th November 2017 3 DAYS

Excursions - Half-board - Sunday evening. Esse-suite room with TV, tea/coffee, Entertainment, Lift, Turkey & Tisell Festivities, Happy Hour each night, Free hot drinks on coach

\$359 BOURNEMOUTH - ULSWATER HOTEL Turkey & Tisell Monday 6th - Friday 10th November 2017 5 DAYS

Excursions - Half board - Esse-suite room with tea/coffee, Entertainment, Lift - Turkey & Tisell Festivities, Free hot drinks on coach

\$375 LITHAM HALL - COUNTRY PARKS NEW YORK & TISSEL Monday 6th - Friday 10th November 2017 5 DAYS

Excursions - Half board - Esse-suite room with TV, tea/coffee, Swimming Pool - Steam Room - Spa Bath, Lift - Entertainment - Turkey & Tisell Festivities

\$379 MYSTERY WEEKEND - WHERE WILL WE BE? HOTEL Turkey & Tisell Saturday 11th - Sunday 12th November 2017 2 DAYS

Excursions - Evening meal - Breakfast, Entertainment, Turkey & Tisell Festivities, Free hot drinks on coach

\$389 SWIMMING & SPA & FAMILY HOTEL Turkey & Tisell Saturday 11th - Sunday 12th November 2017 2 DAYS

Excursions - Half Board - 4 courses table d'hôte. Family Facilities - Spa facilities, Turkey & Tisell Festivities - Sherry Reception, Malled Wine & Mince Pies - Cars - Lift, Free hot drinks on coach

\$399 EXMOUTH - CAVENISH HOTEL Saturday 13th - Friday 17th November 2017 5 DAYS

Excursions - Half board - Esse-suite room with tea/coffee, Entertainment, Turkey & Tisell Festivities, Lift, Free hot drinks on coach

\$395 EASTBURY - HAMPSHIRE HOTEL Turkey & Tisell Monday 20th - Friday 24th November 2017 5 DAYS

Excursions - Half board - Esse-suite room with tea/coffee, Entertainment, Lift, Free hot drinks on coach

\$397 TENBY - CLARENCE HOTEL Turkey & Tisell Saturday 21st - Sunday 22nd November 2017 2 DAYS

Excursions - Evening meal - Breakfast, Entertainment - Happy Hour 6.30pm - 8.30pm, Turkey & Tisell

\$399 CRICKHOWELL - HOTEL CRICKHOWELL SPECIAL Saturday 21st - Sunday 22nd November 2017 2 DAYS

Excursions - Evening meal - Breakfast, Entertainment - Happy Hour 6.30pm - 8.30pm, Turkey & Tisell Festivities - Sherry Reception, Free hot drinks on coach

\$419 MYSTERY TURKEY & TISSEL - WHERE WILL WE BE? HOTEL Turkey & Tisell Friday 24th - Sunday 26th November 2017 4 DAYS

Excursions - Evening meal - Breakfast, Entertainment, Turkey & Tisell Festivities, Happy Hour each night, Free hot drinks on coach

\$425 LLANDUDNO - ST KILDIA HOTEL NEW YORK & TISSEL Monday 27th - Sunday 2nd December 2017 5 DAYS

Excursions - Free hot drinks on coach - Breakfast, Entertainment, Turkey & Tisell Festivities, Free hot drinks on coach

\$429 TORQUAY - NEWMAR HOTEL TURKEY & TISSEL Monday 27th - Sunday 2nd December 2017 5 DAYS

Excursions - Half board - Esse-suite room with tea/coffee, Entertainment, Lift, Happy Hour each night, Free hot drinks on coach

\$429 THURSFORD - SPECTACULAR - NEW BEACH HOTEL Friday 8th December 2017 4 DAYS

Excursions - Half board - Activities to Thessaloniki

\$429 LONDON - 5 STAR WALDORF HOTEL**** CHRISTMAS SHOPPING Sunday 7th - Sunday 15th December 2017 2 DAYS

Drop-off at Harrods for Christmas shopping. Esse-suite rooms - Breakfast, Free time in London, Free hot drinks on coach

\$425 BABACOMBE - HOTEL DE LA MER Saturday 23rd - Wednesday 27th December 2017 3 DAYS

Excursions - Free hot drinks on coach - Breakfast, Entertainment, Turkey & Tisell Festivities, Free hot drinks on coach

\$425 ILFRACOMBE - IMPERIAL HOTEL CHRISTMAS Saturday 23rd - Wednesday 27th December 2017 5 DAYS

Excursions - Half-board - Christmas Festivities, Esse-suite room with TV, tea/coffee - Entertainment, Free hot drinks on coach

\$79 TORQUAY - NEWMAR HOTEL TWIMAS Saturday 24th - Sunday 25th December 2017 2 DAYS

Excursions - Half board - Esse-suite room with TV, tea/coffee, Entertainment - Happy Hour each night New Year Celebrations Bubbly Buffet Free hot drinks on coach

\$169 BABACOMBE - HOTEL DE LA MER TWIMAS Wednesday 27th - Saturday 30th Dec 2017 4 DAYS

Excursions - Half board - Esse-suite room with TV, tea/coffee, Entertainment - Lift, Games Room, Free hot drinks on coach

\$245 LLANDUDNO - ST KILDIA HOTEL Saturday 30th Dec 2017 - Tuesday 2nd Jan 2018 4 DAYS

Price includes: Excursion to Chester arrival drinks, sandwiches, soups & cakes FULL BOARD (6 meal courses) Esse-suite room with TV, tea/coffee

\$225 TORQUAY - NEWMAR HOTEL Saturday 30th Dec 2017 - Tuesday 2nd Jan 2018 4 DAYS

Price includes: Esse-suite room with tea/coffee, Entertainment - Happy Hour each night New Year Celebrations Bubbly Buffet Free hot drinks on coach

\$115 TORQUAY - NEWMAR HOTEL SATURDAY 30th Dec 2017 - Tuesday 2nd Jan 2018 4 DAYS

Price includes: Esse-suite room with tea/coffee, Entertainment - Happy Hour each night New Year Festivities Free hot drinks on coach

\$249 BABACOMBE - HOTEL DE LA MER SATURDAY 30th Dec 2017 - Tuesday 2nd Jan 2018 4 DAYS

Price includes: Excursions Half-board Esse-suite room with TV, tea/coffee, Entertainment - Lift, Games Room, Free hot drinks on coach

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Bollards block drive in parking wrangle



Blocked - bollards and a car obstructs Nigel Serrell's new drive in a dispute over access outside his home in Rowley Regis

A PARKING wrangle in a Black Country street is driving one man up the wall after he came home from work to find bollards blocking his new £5,000 drive.

Nigel Serrell splashed out on transforming his back garden into a driveway, to try and avoid parking rows with neighbours, only for a housing association to put up bollards blocking his new block-paved driveway.

The salesman couldn't believe it when he returned to his home of 18 years on Halesowen Street in Rowley

Regis, to find the barrier posts, complete with a sign declaring 'private property', had been installed on the land that provides access to his drive.

Mr Serrell, aged 58, while himself is not a Midland Heart tenant, says he kept in contact with the housing association throughout his work as he was aware that they owned the surrounding properties. He says they advised him that there would not be an issue.

However, a neighbour subsequently claimed she owns the land at the rear of his house leading to his new drive.

Mr Serrell made the shock discovery of the bollards when he returned

from his job in marketing and sales at a painter and decorator business.

Adding to his problems, a dilapidated and untaxed car has been dumped in front of the bollards.

Director of Housing Management at Midland Heart, Nigel Collumbell said: "We have been working locally with residents for some time to understand and resolve the complex issues around parking and access via land owned by Midland Heart, which is designated for use by Midland Heart customers."

"These discussions are still on-going in order to find a fair solution for everyone involved."

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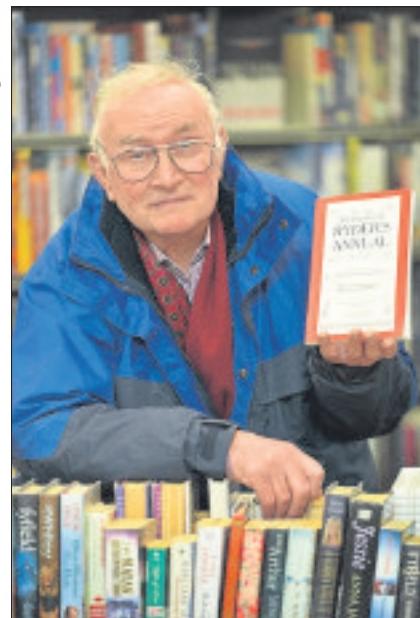
Wednesbury's Lower High Street during the early part of the 20th century



The up-and-coming genteel sport of tennis was starting to take off in Wednesbury



In contrast to the industrial times, Wednesbury's cricket scene thrived



Local historian Tony Highfield at Darlaston Library with the new book 'Ryder's Annual'

Ryder's Annual a unique glimpse of growing town

IT has taken a year to put together, but now people have the chance to glimpse into the past and get their hands on a very special piece of Black Country history.

The Very Best of Ryder's Annual book has been put together by Bev Parker and Tony Highfield.

The book features some of the stories and pictures from the well-known Ryder's Annual, that was first published in the 19th century.

The book charts Wednesbury's history from 1878 to 1918 and goes some way in illustrating the people of the town's contribution to the war effort.

Tony Highfield, aged 74, of Bloxwich revealed how he first came up with the idea for the book. He said: "I was walking down Darlaston High Street when a friend of mine, Joan Bytheway, came up to me and said she had been given some old books for a jumble sale.

"She asked whether I'd like to see them. I said I would and when I went

MEMORY LANE

Report by Jessica Labhart

round there and saw them, I couldn't believe it. The books were two extremely rare Ryder's Annuals.

"I asked if I could borrow them, which I was told I could, and then I spoke to Bev about them. We decided to begin putting a book together on the best of the annuals, and went and visited Wednesbury Library to look at their archive of annuals, too."

The book was launched on December 3 at Wednesbury Library at Darlaston Library on December 10. Mindful Gifts CIC, based on Church Street, Darlaston, a not-for-profit organisation, is also sponsoring the book as it specialises in gifts and activities for people with dementia.

It is hoped that the book will provide an insight into the life and times of local people's ancestors. The book also contains an almanac devoted to the First World War.

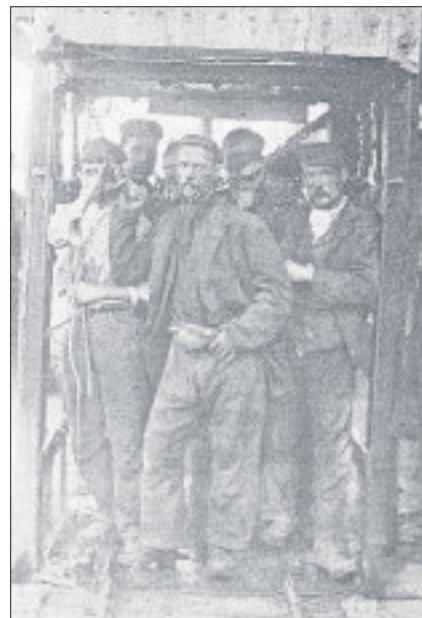
Mr Highfield said: "I just think it is so interesting to see the lives of the people in the book."

"People might be able to find their ancestors in there, old businesses, churches, groups, clubs and societies." In the introduction of the book, Bev Parker states: "The Ryder Annuals offer a unique insight into life in a successful and rapidly developing area. They feature images of the town's dignitaries, industrialists, councillors, photographs of the town centre and countless adverts describing Black Country businesses.

"For this edition of Ryder's Annual, I have chosen some of my favourite articles, adverts, and photographs from the editions that are to be seen in Wednesbury Library. Some of the images featured in the book are Lower High Street, the Town Hall and Art Gallery, Wednesbury Post Office.

"What I'd say is, this book gives you an idea of what life was like back then, but do speak to granny, before it's too late."

The book costs £9.99.



Miners from Wednesbury, working at a local colliery, in the cage to take them underground for their next shift

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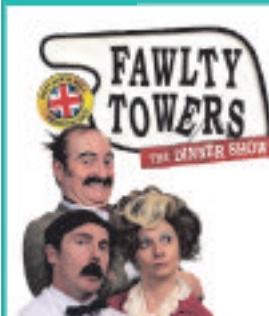
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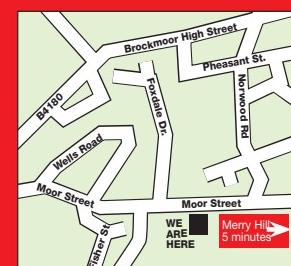
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Inquest hears that man died after fall

A FORMER foundry worker died after a fall at a nursing home, an inquest heard.

John Leek, aged 66, was taken to Russells Hall Hospital on Christmas Eve after he fell over getting up from the breakfast table at Netherton Green Nursing Home, in Dudley.

He was then transferred onto end-of-life care and died on December 29.

He moved to Netherton Green Nursing Home after suffering a fall down his stairs at home.

The cause of death given was prostate cancer, lung cancer, dementia and a fractured hip.

Senior Coroner Zafar Siddique said: "Sadly the trauma of the fall and fractured hip accelerated his death."

A conclusion of accidental death was given.

Criminal drove stolen car at high speed through red lights

A CROOK, who drove a stolen £30,000 car on its wheel rims after its tyres were shredded during a chase through the Black Country, has been jailed for four years.

Andrew Twist, 35, reached 90mph in a 40mph zone, went through red lights and travelled the wrong way around traffic islands in the black Mercedes ML250 after it had been stolen in Stourbridge, Wolverhampton Crown Court heard. He struck glancing blows to two cars while other motorists and a cyclist were forced

to swerve to avoid a collision. He also drove deliberately into a police car during the incident on August 24.

Prosecutor Mr David Iles said: "He displayed a deplorable standard of driving. The pursuit continued for 6.6 miles and lasted up to 15 minutes."

Six police cars were involved in the pursuit along the A41 towards West Bromwich and then towards Tividale. Stingers – a spiked trap set by police – were deployed, bursting the Mercedes' tyres. Police eventually boxed in the Mercedes in Dudley Road West but Twist locked himself

inside, forcing an officer to smash the driver's window with a baton.

Mr Iles added: "The defendant was still making efforts to escape and struggled with the police. He was full of fight and had to be handcuffed."

Mr Stephen Hamblett, defending, said Twist, of Leys Crescent, Brierley Hill, had been on his way to sell the car for drug money and had panicked when spotted by police.

Twist, who had a string of previous convictions, admitted dangerous driving, having no insurance or licence and handling stolen property.

No convictions on forced marriage

FORCED marriages are reported to West Midlands Police at a rate of one a week but there has never been a successful conviction in the region, says a police boss.

Deputy Chief Constable Louisa Rolfe said that calls were often from concerned relatives but the crime was a 'complex' one to prosecute. She said that victims, normally Asian women aged 18 to 24, were often 'reluctant' to see family members criminalised.

"We receive on average one report a week relating to forced marriage," DCC Rolfe told the West Midlands Strategic Policing and Crime Board. "They contact us to say they are worried for a friend or themselves. We have not had a conviction. Only South Wales Police nationally has secured a conviction."

O'Hara signs up for team Big Brother



Ex-Wolves player Jamie O'Hara enters the Big Brother house

FORMER Wolves midfielder Jamie O'Hara declared he was available to join a new club from January 1 – but on January 3 he entered the Celebrity Big Brother house.

And so begins the wild and whacky world of one of the most controversial footballers ever to play in the West Midlands. The 30-year-old strutted down the catwalk with his usual swagger on launch night, decked out in a purple three-piece suit, grinning from ear to ear during his interview with host Emma Willis.

He was his usual brash self declaring that he was best known for his time at Tottenham Hotspur and being married to Danielle Lloyd.

The very fact O'Hara had to explain why he was famous to the viewing public makes the word 'celebrity' pretty tenuous, writes Heather Large.

His ex-wife is no stranger to CBB, having found herself caught up in controversy during 2007's series five when, along with the late Jade Goody, S Club 7 singer Jo O'Meara and Bollywood actress Shilpa Shetty.

While Calum Best and America's reality couple 'Speidi' – Spencer Pratt and Heidi Montag – lead the betting to be crowned champion, O'Hara finds himself among the favourites to get the boot alongside models Nicola McLean and Jasmine Waltz.

Campaign says pubs need more protection

PUBS must be given greater protection from redevelopment, campaigners say after it was revealed more than 2,000 had now been safeguarded.

Several pubs in the Black Country have been made assets of community value (ACV) in a bid to stop them from closing. The status makes it more difficult for developers to convert or knock down pubs which are still operating.

The Campaign for Real Ale (Camra) has called on the Government to introduce new measures to ensure owners must always seek planning permission before any changes are made. Colin Valentine, Camra national chairman said: "It is heartening that so many communities across England have spent so much time going through the process of nominating their pub as an Asset of Community Value. This shows a huge appetite for protecting pubs, which are more than just businesses, they are invaluable landmarks in our communities."

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Glassboys pride of the Black Country



Still smiling – these fans were not disheartened



Glassboys' fans celebrate Stourbridge's 70th minute equaliser

'THEY did us proud – it was a valiant effort.'

Stourbridge may have been knocked out of the FA Cup but they returned home to the Black Country with pride intact – and the reputation of players and fans massively enhanced.

Supporters set off for Wycombe for their third round match hoping to add to their recent giant-killing record.

As 12 coaches rolled out to start the 97-mile journey to Adams Park, there was a sense of anticipation,

The FA Cup fairy tale ended but Stourbridge FC can hold their heads high says David Cosgrove

expectation and optimism. Having dispatched Northampton in the previous round, the thinking went, why couldn't Stourbridge do it again?

It was clear this was no ordinary away day, with the presence of a Danish TV crew filming the fans on one of the coaches.

Not what usually happens on a trip to Buxton in the Northern Premier League but there is something

special about the world's oldest cup competition.

For fans like 77-year-old Ken Guest, this match was a lifetime in the making.

A Glassboys fan of 74 years standing, the pensioner has seen hundreds of players come through the club in his time.

But he rates the current crop as one of the best he's seen and before the match he had fancied Gary Hackett's side to grab a 1-1 draw and take Wycombe back to the Black Country for a replay.

His prediction nearly came up trumps.

The Glassboys gave it a real go and were only outdone at the last by a thumping header by Chairboys' striker, Adebayo Akinfenwa. But this wasn't a day that was just about the result.

It was about the experience, the adventure, the story to tell the grandchildren.

About the day 2,000 fans of a Northern Premier League side took over a League Two ground. The fans out sang their opposition while the players outplayed theirs for much of the tie.

A cacophony of noise came from the massed ranks of away fans for nearly an hour before kick-off.

As the match got under way the Stourbridge fans continued to drown out their hosts. All the noise was coming from the away end, with little in response from the sur-



Captain fantastic Tom Tonks consoled at the end of the game

tinued right up to the 90th minute and beyond.

Even Akinfenwa's late winner for Wycombe did little to dampen the spirits of the Stourbridge fans. The away end remained packed for 15 minutes after the final whistle as supporters paid tribute to the valiant Glassboys' players. Mr Guest said afterwards: "They played very well and I think they deserved a draw."

"We're disappointed, but never mind."

Dudley Council leader Pete Lowe said: "It was absolutely fantastic. Stourbridge FC made the fans proud, the town proud and the Black Country proud. They have made history. It was a fantastic occasion from start to finish. The supporters were superb."



Stourbridge chairman Andy Pountney in front of the travelling fans

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Illegal worker was thwarted by bank staff over passport

ILLEGAL immigrant Parvinder Singh slipped into this country unnoticed and found a job but was caught out after he was robbed, Wolverhampton Crown Court was told.

The 30-year-old single man decided it would be safer to have his wage paid into a bank so went to open an account at the HSBC branch in Dudley using a fake Portuguese passport.

Staff at the bank found his behaviour suspicious and were confident both he and a male friend who accompanied him were not speaking to each other in Portuguese, explained Mr David Iles, prosecuting.

Home Office experts checked his passport and found that the document was false. Singh was arrested when he went back to the branch for an arranged meeting.

Forged

A search of his home revealed another forged passport in his name, although this one was Italian.

Mr Simon Hanns, defending, said: "He had been robbed of money and could not make an official complaint because he is an illegal immigrant who should not have been working in this country. He sought to open a bank account to protect the money he was illegally earning."

"This was an unsophisticated attempt. He is a respectable man of previous good character who is the first member of his family to fall foul of the law in any country."

Singh, of Owen Street, Brierley Hill pleaded guilty to possession of a false identity document and was jailed for 15 months.

Recorder Greg Pryce said that the fact the defendant had a second false passport at his home aggravated the offence and told him: "Although you may have been trying to open the account to protect your money this is still a serious offence."

Striders hope for runaway success



Runners Simon Charlton, Paul Millard, Paul Bradbourne, Steve Holmes, Joanne Morris and Richard Field
A GROUP of runners are getting ready to pound the streets for a host of charities at this year's London Marathon on April 23.

Training has already started for the gutsy group from Sedgley Striders, who will be taking to the streets of the capital with tens of thousands of others to take on the 26-mile challenge.

Joanne Morris, of Wolverhampton, and Steve

Holmes, of Sedgley, are both running for Parkinsons UK, while Simon Charlton, of Lanesfield, will be raising cash for Get Kids Going.

Paul Millard and Paul Bradbourne, both of Coseley, will be running for MacMillan and The Bobby Moore Fund respectively, while Richard Field, of Sedgley, will be fundraising for Children with Cancer.

Busiest day for ambulances

WEST Midlands Ambulance Service had its busiest day ever on New Year's Day, figures have revealed.

The service received no fewer than 4,629 emergency calls across all the areas it covers, a staggering 807 more than the next busiest day, which was the same day in 2011.

It rounded off an incredibly busy festive period for the Trust. For the five day period from December 29 to January 2, the service took a total of 18,583 calls compared to 15,983 for the same period in 2015-16. That equates to a 16.6 per cent rise in call numbers for the five days.

In the Black Country alone, the service saw 962

calls on January 1, with 866 received in Staffordshire.

In the Black Country, December 31 saw 707 calls, with January 2 having 740 calls.

The service saw the evening of New Year's Eve and the early hours of New Year's Day filled with alcohol-related calls. The majority of calls during the five days were for people who were unwell with breathing difficulties, chest pains and falls.

Chief Executive of the Trust, Anthony Marsh, said: "I am very grateful and proud of all the staff and volunteers that worked through this period. While the majority of people were enjoying time with family and friends, my staff were working 24 hours a day to keep the public of the West Midlands safe."



Companion

/kəm'pānijən/

noun

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2. talking to my new friend Mary

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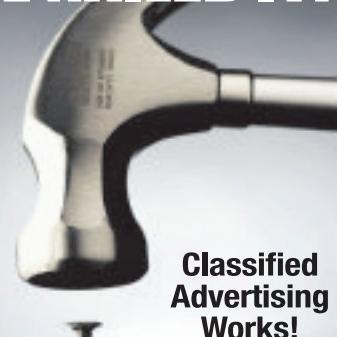
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Councillor John Reynolds, left, and Jonn Penney, look at the line-up for the first Wolverhampton Literary Festival

Ready to book in for city's first literary festival

MUSIC and memories of life in Wolverhampton and the Black Country will feature in the city's first literary festival.

The team behind the inaugural event has now finalised its line-up featuring dozens of authors, poets and actors across 13 venues between January 27 and 29.

The main attraction for many will be award-winning author Sathnam Sanghera. The former Wolverhampton Grammar School student's first book, The Boy With The Topknot: A Memoir

of Love, Secrets and Lies in Wolverhampton, is being adapted for TV to air on the BBC this autumn. The Boy With The Topknot was shortlisted for the 2008 Costa Biography Award and named 2009 Mind Book of the Year. The 40-year-old has also won numerous prizes for his journalism.

Others will no doubt be drawn by two rock frontmen. Ned's Atomic Dustbin singer Jonn Penney, from Stourbridge, will discuss the early years of the so-called 'grebo' scene with best-selling author Martin Roach at The Slade Rooms.

The Wonder Stuff frontman Miles Hunt will talk about his band's most successful years, between 1990 and '94.

Black Country character Doreen Tipton, as played by actress Gill Jordan, will speak at the University of Wolverhampton, and Express & Star columnist Peter Rhodes will discuss his military history book, For A Shilling A Day, at the city's art gallery.

The festival is a mix of free and ticketed events. For the latest programme and booking details go to www.wolvesliteraturefestival.co.uk website.

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Iraq mission ahead for Army Reserve



4Mercian troops take a break during training on Salisbury Plain. Members are to deploy to Iraq in the second half of this year

ARMY Reserve troops from the 4th Battalion the Mercian Regiment (4Mercian) are set to deploy to Iraq in 2017.

They will join regular forces from the Regiment's 2nd Battalion (2Mercian) - linked to the former Staffordshire Regiment - on a six-month tour of duty in a move that illustrates the increasing importance of the role played by the Reserve, formerly the TA, in the new-look British Army.

The tour is expected to take place in the second half of the year, with troops providing support and training for Iraqi forces, but exact details have not been disclosed.

Members of 4Mercian, whose headquarters are in Wolverhampton, will

also spend the next three months in Africa training up to 1,000 Ugandan soldiers from that country's defence force for a tour of duty with the African Union Mission in Somalia.

Cpl Andy Bolus, aged 30, from Wolverhampton, has deployed to both Iraq and Afghanistan during his 13 years in 4Mercian and has also trained the Ugandan forces for previous missions.

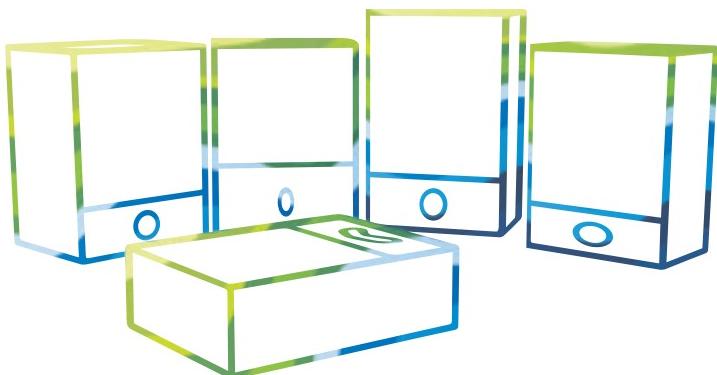
He said: "They are going into a war situation. They do not have the same standard of kit as we do because they do not enjoy the same level of investment but in just a matter of weeks you could see them improving massively."

Cpl Bolus, now an HQ Company recruiter, added: "When I first joined what was then called the TA we were

five years behind the regulars - our kit and training. Now, in some cases, we are getting it before them. There is still banter between us but the days when you felt they were looking down on us are long gone."

The battalion, which is working closely with 2Mercian, also has around 20 troops currently deployed on a six-month tour of duty as UN peacekeepers patrolling the Green Line between Greek and Turkish troops in Cyprus.

Among them is 22-year-old Private Lewis White, who has become the first graduate of Wolverhampton University's Armed Forces Degree course to be awarded the Lieutenant General 'Bashall Trophy' for academic excellence.



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We love to make people happy

He organised a 90th birthday party for Nelson Mandela and married then divorced both Chrissie Hynde and Patsy Kensit.

He leads the most famous Scottish band of all time – Simple Minds have shipped more than 40 million records, scored five number one hits and headlined Wembley Stadium – and also owns a hotel in Sicily. But these days, Jim Kerr doesn't even get recognised when he steps out of his Glasgow flat in the city's south side. It's funny how life changes as you get older. Don't You Forget About Jim.

Jim Kerr is one of the nicest and most erudite men in rock, though some of his ex-band mates might not think so. They'll be back on the road in spring – they headline Birmingham's Symphony Hall on May 17 – but before that there's the small matter of their beautifully conceived and perfectly formed acoustic album.

Simple Minds Acoustic features 15 re-worked tunes from their Imperial Era. There's Chelsea Girl, a reimagined Don't You (Forget About Me) and Glittering Prize and there's a reworked version of Promised You A Miracle, featuring KT Tunstall, alongside a soft-strummed-but-still-bally Alive And Kicking. Who knew acoustic music could still sound, well, B.I.G?

Promo

Fans have been asking for an acoustic album since the dawn of time but, until now, he's manfully resisted. Simple question: what changed?

"To be honest, we've been getting asked for this kind of thing since back in the great MTV Unplugged days. It's always been in the air but one of the things that we were always trying to do was to look at new things. We're not great at looking back."

"It came about when we were doing the promo for the last album, Big Music, and Chris Evans, on Radio 2, got us in. He had been a real big fan. He told us to go in and do two or three songs acoustically."

"We bit the bullet and at 7am on the morning we busked about two or three songs." The reaction was overwhelming. Chris's 11 million listeners were Mad For It, to coin a phrase made popular by Patsy Kensit's subsequent husband. And sure as night follows day, every radio station across Europe wanted a repeat.

Two or three songs on the radio is, of course, different to recording 15 for an album. The idea of an acoustic album was duly shelved and Simple Minds got on with Big Music, their superlative 2014 offering. But while it was easy to ignore the requests to play songs for radio, it was harder to

ignore requests backed with hard cash.

"We were to-ing and fro-ing and then our manager came up to us in the January and, as always, money talks. He said promoter in Switzerland wanted us to play up a mountain. And he wanted us to play acoustically. So we thought 'great'."

But getting one of Britain's great stadium bands to make music suited to a wine bar wasn't easy. How do you put the Hey, Hey, Hey-yeah, of Don't You (Forget About Me) on at an acoustic club? Not without reason were Simple Minds lauded for their stadium-friendly anthems.

Jim laughs. "We flitted through songs that we were sure would never work. We had always been swept away with production and a big sound. But when we just went down to the song, I didn't realise there was so much underneath."

Test

They booked a gig in London, deciding to test their acoustic set on unsuspecting fans at Hackney Empire.

"Talk about winging it. People from all over the world wanted to see that and we'd never done it before. Talk about being in it at the deep end. We were totally vulnerable."

"There's a kind of prejudice whenever you say the word 'acoustic'. People imagine two blokes on some stool surrounded by candles. But we didn't want to be little. We've got this thing of having energy and passion on stage. It's acoustic but it's a Simple Minds version, which is dynamic and atmospheric and all of that stuff."

And yet, it could all have been so different. There was a time not so many years ago when Simple Minds couldn't get arrested. They were yesterday's men. All washed up. Out of the game. They'd gone from having three consecutive number one platinum albums, followed by two that reached number two, to scratching about at numbers 141 and 80.

Radar

It would have been easier to call it a day. Jim could have spent his days at his hotel, the Villa Angela, in Sicily. Or, if performance was an itch he really did have to scratch, he could have taken one of the humungous cheques on offer for signing up to an 80s tour.

"We don't have a grudge to bear or anything. For a lot of people Simple Minds were off the radar for a long time and it's hard to get back on it when you've been off it."

So how did they do it? Jim's answer is simple: "Hard work. We've worked the last 10-12 years trying to do quality stuff. A lot of people have wondered why we'd bothered. But we love our story and the position we're in and we love our catalogue. We have different types of fans and for the hardcore, they want to see the band evolving."

Andy Richardson



Simple success – the band formed in the late 70s



Great minds – five number one albums



Don't you forget – Charlie Burchill with Jim Kerr

Dreams come true for Avenged Sevenfold



Californian rockers Avenged Sevenfold promise a spectacular show involving space and artificial intelligence when they play the Genting Arena

BACK when they were 17, they dreamed of headlining festivals and playing alongside Metallica.

Eighteen years later, Avenged Sevenfold are friends with Metallica and have headlined Download Festival.

The Californian rock giants play the Genting Arena in Birmingham on Friday, January 13, supported by heavy metal icons Disturbed. They first performed in the UK in 2004. "Ever since

then, the UK has been a special place for us," said lead singer Matt 'M' Shadows.

Of that first tour – which saw the group play the O2 Academy in Birmingham – he says: "We had a little Sprinter van, in which we would spend nine or 10 hour drives just staring at each other. Then we'd hop out and play a show."

Though Matt looks the hardened rocker, with his muscular tattooed body, he is also a devoted father. "I've got a two-year-old and a four-year-old. The four-year-old comes with us to shows

but the two-year-old's a maniac – he's just nuts," laughed Matt.

Looking to the band's Birmingham show, Matt said the band had come up with something "completely different". "We've worked on something using space and artificial intelligence. We're super excited because the UK is going to be the first place to experience it. We'll be locked and loaded and ready for the show."

For the full interview by Kirsten Rawlins, visit www.expressandstar.com/entertainment/



Boss praises bluesy Ana

GUITAR-SLINGING blues songstress Ana Popovic brings her smoky blend of funk, jazz and blues to Bilston's Robin 2 venue on Tuesday.

She has been described as 'one helluva a guitar player' by Bruce Springsteen and ZZ Top's Billy Gibbons said 'Ana rocks the blues in fine, fine fashion'. The 40-year-old Serbian singer (pictured left) has been nominated for five Blues Music Awards and is a major star on the contemporary blues scene. Her albums, including Still Making History, Can You Stand The Heat and Unconditional, have featured in the US blues charts. She joined the likes of Buddy Guy, Eric Johnson and Zakk Wylde on the recent tribute tour celebrating the music of Jimi Hendrix.

Ana now lives in Memphis USA but was born in Belgrade and grew up in musical family. She grabbed her father's guitar at the age of 15 and began learning from his impressive blues and soul record collection.

She formed her first band, Hush, 20 years ago in Belgrade but the group disbanded after she left her homeland to study jazz in the Netherlands. Soon afterwards she was contributing to a Hendo tribute album alongside Taj Mahal and former Animals frontman Eric Burdon. She released her first solo album, Hush!, on a German label. Her love of the blues led her to America and she has been based in Tennessee for five years.

Ana and her powerful band are constantly touring, playing major blues, jazz and rock festivals. She is endorsed by Fender and has shared stages with BB King, Buddy Guy, Joe Bonamassa and many others. Her latest album, Trilogy, was released last May.

Tickets cost £15 in advance or £17 on the door and the venue opens at 7.30pm. Visit www.therobin.co.uk or call 01902 401211.

Ex-Deep Purple star is ready to rock the Robin

ROCKER Glenn Hughes is to return to the West Midlands later this month.

Cannock-born singer Hughes, of legendary band Deep Purple and the voice of The KLF's hit What Time Is Love?, is to take to the stage at the Robin 2 venue in Bilston on Monday, January 23.

The US-based rock star, who also fronted popular early 1970s Wolverhampton band Trapeze, in recent years was singer and bassist with rock supergroup Black Country Communion.

Hughes will be supported by Walsall band Stone Broken who were voted runners-up in the Best New Band category of the annual Planet Rock Awards 2016. The first band are on stage at 8pm.

Tickets cost £22.50 in advance or £24.50 on the door. Contact the box office on 01902 401211 or visit www.therobin.co.uk

Lots of dance delight with the Strictly stars

STRICTLY Come Dancing The Live Tour kicks off in Birmingham on Friday, January 20, with five performances over three days. These feature stars of the 2016 show, including Ed 'Gangnam Style' Balls and glitterball winner Ore Oduba with his new dancer partner Karen Clifton.

There is lots more dance delight in the offing for ballroom and latin fans this month. Brendan Cole brings his new show All Night Long to Wolverhampton Grand Theatre on January 26. Then Anton du Beke and Erin Boag are joined by Strictly singer Lance Ellington for Swing Time at the Symphony Hall, Birmingham, on January 28.

Ballet fans can look forward to the annual visit by the Russian State Ballet of Siberia to the Grand, February 5 to 7, with The Nutcracker, Swan Lake and Coppelia.

January busy gig scene sees 2017 off to a flyer

GOSSIP Girl actress Taylor Momsen brings her band The Pretty Reckless to Birmingham's O2 Institute next Friday, January 20, and Two Door Cinema Club have sold out their concert at O2 Academy in Brum on January 24.

White Buffalo, AKA Jake Smith, plays the Institute 2 on January 21, the same night King Croosette (Kenny Anderson) is at Birmingham Town Hall. Watch out for rising star Declan McKenna at the Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath, on January 25.

Major concerts for blues fans include Ana Popovic (see above) at the Robin 2 on Tuesday and the Bリストon venue then hosts the Aynsley Lister Band on Thursday and Lil' Jimmy Reed on January 24. Aussie guitar great Tommy Emmanuel performs his It's Never Too Late album at Birmingham Town Hall January 20.

Short Breaks & Holidays

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Mon 23 Jan	5 Rhine Valley Inclusive	£139
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Fri 10 Feb	7 Venice Carnival Spectacular (2 evening meals)	£299
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2 DAYS Thu 16 March £139

What's included? • Coach travel with reserved seating
• One night dinner, bed & breakfast at our select hotel
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• Inclusive admission to watch Olly Murs live in concert at Liverpool Echo Arena.

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Sat 4 Feb	4 Liverpool & Hobbycraft - Live	£69
Sat 25 Feb	Leeds and York Jorkvik Viking Festival	£79
Sat 25 Feb	London Spectacular & The Classic Car Show	£119
Sat 18 Mar	Ramsbottom Chocolate Festival & The Lakes	£79
Sat 25 Mar	Manchester Bike Show & Liverpool	£89
Sat 1 Apr	Victoria at Harewood House	£89
Sat 15 Apr	London & The Tall Ships Regatta Extra Special	£119
Sat 22 Apr	Cotswold Winter 1940's Special	£89
Sat 22 Apr	Skipton Market & Harrogate Flower Show	£99
Tue 25 Apr	Gino's Italian Escape - Live!	£99
Sat 6 May	The London Motor Show	£89
Sat 13 May	Abingdon Airshow & Historic Bath	£99
Sat 13 May	Hobbycrafts, Stitch & Sew - Live!	£79
Sat 10 Jun	Ideal-Home Show & Liverpool	£79
Sat 24 Jun	Harlow Carr Flower Show	£79

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Family Fun Great breaks for all the family!

Harry Potter - Studio Tour

2 DAYS Sat 28 January £119 Thu 6 April £119

What's included? • Coach travel with reserved seating
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2 DAY FAMILY FUN BREAKS Sat 18 Feb Legoland Discovery & Blackpool funline £79 Polar Bears, Penguins & Kingdom of Ice £99 Sat 18 Mar Legoland Spectacular £99 Sat 15 Apr Legoland £119 Polar Bears, Penguins & Kingdom of Ice £99 Longleat Safari Park, Jungle Cruise & Windsor £99 Sat 22 Apr Legoland Discovery & Blackpool Funline £89 Sat 20 May Polar Bears, Penguins & Kingdom of Ice £89 Legoland Spectacular £119 Longleat Safari Park, Jungle Cruise & Windsor £99 Sat 27 May Legoland Spectacular £119 Polar Bears, Penguins & Kingdom of Ice £99 Longleat Safari Park, Jungle Cruise & Windsor £99 Legoland Discovery & Blackpool Funline £89 Sat 3 Jun Legoland Discovery & Blackpool Funline £89 Polar Bears, Penguins & Kingdom of Ice £99 Legoland Spectacular £119 Longleat Safari Park, Jungle Cruise & Windsor £99 Legoland Discovery & Blackpool Funline £89 Sat 17 Jun Legoland Spectacular £119 Longleat Safari Park, Jungle Cruise & Windsor £99 Legoland Discovery & Blackpool Funline £89 Sat 24 Jun Legoland Spectacular £119 Longleat Safari Park, Jungle Cruise & Windsor £99 Legoland Discovery & Blackpool Funline £89 Sat 1 Jul Legoland Spectacular £119

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CHOICE

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00 Saturday Kitchen.** **11.30 The Best Dishes Ever.** **(R) 12.00 Football Focus.** **1.00 BBC News:** Weather. **1.15 Bargain Hunt.** **(R) 2.15 Wanted Down Under.** **(R) 3.15 Escalate to the Country.** **4.00 BBC Score.** **5.20 BBC News.** **5.30 Regional Programme.** **5.40 Collywombino.**

6.10 Pointless Celebrities. **Jilly Goolden,** **Ollie Smith,** **Sophie Grigson,** **Michael Caine,** **Fay Maschler,** **Brian Turner,** **Cyrus Todiwala** and **Tony Singh** compete in a "food and drink" edition of the unorthodox quiz.

7.00 Let It Shine. **Graham Norton** and **Met Giedroyc's** mission to assemble a new boyband for a nation-touring musical continues. This time, the hopeful stars continue with their solo auditions in front of a studio audience in Manchester. Judges **Gar Barlow,** **Danni Minogue,** **Martin Kemp** and **Amber Riley** must decide whether any of the would-be pop princes are worthy of a place in **Let It Shine's** five-strong headline act, while **Graham** and **Met** keep viewers up to date with all the backstage action, fun and gossip.

8.25 Casually. A scuffle at an illegal rave leads an over-enthusiastic sergeant causing serious head injuries to a 19-year-old man and later placing drugs in his belongings to corroborate his claim that he had been assaulted twice by his peers. **Joseph** is dubious about the sergeant's story and takes a police constable to one side in an attempt to persuade her not be an accomplice to her superior's crooked ways.

Elsewhere, **Connie** goes on the line as **Connie** goes on the warpath.

9.15 Taboo. **James Delaney's** sets about enlisting allies to help him reclaim his legacy, but an unexpected arrival at the reading of his father's will threatens to disrupt his plans.

10.15 BBC News: Weather; National Lottery Update.

10.30 Match of the Day. **Gary Lineker** presents action from the latest Premier League matches, including **Leicester City v Chelsea** at the King Power Stadium and **Swansea City v Arsenal** at the Liberty Stadium.

12.25 Film: **The Ring.** (2002) **1.45** Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.50 BBC News.**

1.50 This Is BBC Two.

BBC2

6.45 Film: Higher and Higher. (1943) Musical comedy, with **Jack Haley** and **Frank Sinatra.** **8.15 Film:** The Magic Box. (1951) Biopic of cinema pioneer **William Fraine-Green**, starring **Robert Donat.** **9.00 Film:** **Brilliant.** (R) **9.00 Homes Under the Hammer.** (R) **10.00 Score.** **5.20 BBC News.** **5.30 Regional Programme.** **5.40 Collywombino.**

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1.50 This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Grizly Tales for Gruesome Kids. **6.10 Grizly Tales for Gruesome Kids.** (R) **6.25 Dino Dan:** Trek's Adventures. **(R) 6.35 Dino Dan:** Trek's Adventures. **(R) 6.45 Sooyi.** (R) **6.55 Super 4:** (R) **6.55 Super 4:** (R) **7.00 Super 4:** (R) **7.15 Oddbods.** (R) **7.20 Oddbods:** (R) **7.30 Scrambled!** **7.35 Scrambled!** Mr Bean: The Animated Series. **(R) 7.55 Scrambled!: Horrid Henry.** **8.10 Scrambled!: The Powerpuff Girls.** (R) **8.30 Scrambled!: Bear Grylls Survival School.** **9.05 Scrambled!: Adventure Time.** (R) **9.25 This House.** (R) **11.25 Judge Rinder.** (R) **12.30 ITV News:** Weather. **12.40 River Monsters.** (R) **1.10 Bargain Shop Wars.** (R) **1.40 Film:** The Mummy Returns. (2001) Fantasy adventure sequel, starring **Brendan Fraser.** **4.05 Dance Dance Dance.** (R) **5.35 Regional Programme:** Weather. **5.45 ITV News:** Weather.

6.00 The Brits Are Coming.

7.00 Ninja Warrior UK. Competitors from across the UK test their strength, speed and courage in this obstacle-course challenge, hosted by Ben Shephard, Rochelle Humes and Chris Kamara.

8.00 The Voice UK. The spinning-chair singing contest continues, as another selection of would-be stars put their musical skills to the test via a series of music coach line-ups. **Hughie, Gary, Rossdale, Will.i.am and Tom Jones**, who are tasked with selecting more acts to champion in the blind auditions. Sitting with their backs to the prospective pop icons, the coaches select the ones they like based on their vocal abilities alone, but as always, it remains to be seen whether this batch of contestants will have what it takes to reach the end of the contest and claim that lucrative record contract with Polydor. **Emma Willis** is on hand to oversee proceedings.

9.30 Through the Keyhole. **Keith Lemon, Eamonn Holmes, Emma Bunton and Jonathan Ross** to guess the identities of the celebrities whose homes he peruses.

10.30 ITV News: Weather.

10.45 Film: Terminator 2: Judgment Day. (1991) Sci-fi adventure sequel.

1.15 Jackpot247. **3.00 Who's Doing the Dishes?** (R) **3.50 ITV Nightshift.**

CHANNEL 4

6.15 The King of Queens. (R) **6.40 The King of Queens.** (R) **7.05 Everybody Loves Raymond.** (R) **7.30 Everybody Loves Raymond.** (R) **8.00 Everybody Loves Raymond.** (R) **8.30 Frasier.** (R) **9.00 Friends.** (R) **9.30 The Big Bang Theory.** (R) **10.30 The Big Bang Theory.** (R) **10.55 The Simpsons.** (R) **11.25 The Simpsons.** (R) **11.55 Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA.** (R) **12.55 Jamie and Jimmy's Friday Night Feast.** (R) **2.00 Darts:** BDO Lakeside World Professional Championships. The eighth day of the BDO World Championships.

6.30 Channel 4 News.

7.00 Penelope Keith's Hidden Villages. **Penelope Keith** starts her journey in the Cotswolds, and explores the celebrated village of Bibury, as well as Kelmscott, the home of William Morris. Slade, the village setting of a book by Laura Lee; Down Ampney, and Hook Norton. Plus, she visits a village fete in Ebrington. (R)

8.00 Great Canal Journeys. **Timothy West** and **Prunella Scales** embark on more waterway adventures, beginning 14 miles west of Venice on the Brenta, a river that was first canalised in the 13th century.

Lined with palaces which were once holiday homes for Venetian nobility, they follow the route that Casanova and Lord Byron took to the city. After crossing the Venetian lagoon, Tim and Prue arrive at St Mark's Square, where they explore the Grand Canal and discover the tranquillity and beauty of the smaller canals that tourists rarely see. (R)

9.00 Film: Oblivion. (2013) A

repairman is assigned to salvage the remaining resources from Earth, which has been left a devastated wasteland after a war with an alien race. He discovers a human survivor on the surface of the planet, an encounter that exposes secrets from the past that threaten the future of the human race. Sci-fi adventure, starring Tom Cruise and Morgan Freeman.

11.30 Film: Immortals. (2011) A man is chosen by the Greek gods to prevent a power-mad king from conquering the human and immortal worlds. Mythological adventure, with Henry Cavill.

1.35 Hollyoaks. **3.35 Win It Cook It.** (R) **4.05 Hoarder SOS.** (R) **5.00 Location, Location, Location.** (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **9.10 The Fairly OddParents.** (R) **9.45 Big Bash Cricket Live.** **1.30 The Hotel Inspector.** (R) **2.30 Buddies Make You Laugh Out Loud.** (R) **3.30 Dogs Make You Laugh Out Loud.** (R) **4.25 Dogs Make You Laugh Out Loud.** (R) **5.25 Kittens Make You Laugh Out Loud.** (R)

6.25 NCIS: Los Angeles. Sam goes undercover as a bomb specialist when he investigates the death of a demolition expert, but faces a race against time to find explosives located across LA.

7.10 NCIS: Los Angeles. The team investigate when a reporter is murdered as she prepares to break a story about a mysterious Libyan freedom fighter named El-Libi.

8.00 NCIS. Gibbs throws himself back into his hobby following his near-death experience, while his appearance and tackling a new risky case alongside DEA agent Luis Mitchell, who wants help bringing down a drug cartel.

Concerned about his colleague's apparent enthusiasm to re-enter the field, DiNozzos discovers Mitchell is the son of a former NCIS agent who gave his life trying to save Gibbs' wife and daughter, and this attachment is causing Gibbs to break his own rule against personal involvement in a case. However, danger is posed by Benson long, the cartel's head, and Mitchell's top target.

8.55 News Weekend.

9.00 Football on 5: The Championship.

George Riley and Lynsey Hippgrave introduce action from the latest fixtures, which included Bristol City v Cardiff City at Ashton Gate, Fulham v Barnsley at Craven Cottage, and Rotherham United v Norwich City at AESSEAL New York Stadium.

10.00 Football on 5: Goal Rush.

George Riley and Lynsey Hippgrave introduce all the goals from the latest matches in Leagues One and Two, including Walsall v Sheffield United, and Plymouth Argyle v Stevenage.

10.30 Celebrity Big Brother. Highlights of the housemates' past 24 hours under the all-seeing eye of Big Brother.

11.30 Lip Sync Battle UK: Alexander Armstrong vs Jimmy Carr. (R)

12.00 SuperCasino. **3.05 Celebrity Big Brother.** (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 Timeshift: The Golden Age of Coach Travel 8.00 Inside Chernobyl's Mega Tomb 9.00 Lost Kingdoms of Central America 10.00 The Young Montalbano 11.45 Top of the Pops: 1983-2012 Elvis Costello: Mystery Dance 1.20 Later Presents - Elvis Costello in Concert 2.20 Great Guitar Riffs at the BBC 3.20 Close ITV2

11.20 The Big Quiz - Coronation Street v **Emmerdale** 12.25 **Ninja Warrior UK** 1.30 50 Greatest Harry Potter Moments 3.05 Film: Horrid Henry: The Movie (2011)

4.05 FYI Daily 4.10 Film: Hotel Transylvania (2012) 5.35 Film: Day 6.00 Film: Hotel Transylvania (2012) 6.45 7.45 FYI Daily 7.50 Film: The Amazing Spider-Man 2 (2014) 9.30 Film: Wanted (2008) 11.30 FYI Daily 10.35 Film:

Wanted (2008) 11.40 Family Guy 1.05 American Dad! 2.00 Dads 2.20 Safeword 3.00 Teleshopping

ITV3
11.25 Film: Hidden Treasure (2001) 1.30 A Touch of Frost 6.00 Midsummers Murders 8.00 Doc Martin 9.00 Midsummers Murders 11.00 Lewis 1.00 Blue Murder 2.00 ITV3 Nightscreen 2.30 Teleshopping

ITV4
11.00 Pawn Stars 11.30 Film: Apache (1948) 12.35 FYI Daily 12.40 Film: Apache (1945) 1.20 Nijinsky's Triple Crown 2.00 Racing Live from Warwick and Kempton Park. Coverage of races from Warwick and Kempton Park. 4.00 Film: Red River (1948) 5.05 FYI Daily 5.10 Film: Red River (1948) 6.40 Pawn Stars 7.05 Mr Bean 8.10 River Monsters 9.15 Film: The Client (1994)

10.20 FYI Daily 10.25 Film: The Client (1994) 11.40 Film: Don't Say a Word (2001) 12.50 FYI Daily 12.55 Film: Don't Say a Word (2001) 2.00 Hell on Wheels 2.50 ITV4 Nightscreen

E4
11.00 Baby Daddy 12.00 Black-ish 1.00 Young & Hungry 2.00 The Goldbergs 4.00 Brooklyn Nine-Nine 5.00 The Big Bang Theory 9.00 Film: Friends with Benefits (2011) 11.15 Gogglebox 1.25 The Inbetweeners 2.25 Cheving Gum 2.50 Tattoo Fixers 3.45 Bad Robots 4.10 Suburgatory 4.50 Revenge

Film4
11.00 The Black Arrow (1948) 1.00 The Jane Austen Book Club (2007) 3.05 First Daughter (2004) 5.15 The Spy Next Door (2010) 7.00 Legend (1985) 9.00 The Family (2013) 11.15 Blue Ruin (2014) 1.00 Bully (2001) 3.20 Close

For more information or to book, please call: **01902 902165**

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SAT 8.30-16.00 SUN 10.00-16.00

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CHOICE



BBC1

- 6.00 Breakfast.** **7.30** Match of the Day. (R) **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** The Big Questions. **11.00** Regional Programme. **12.15** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** Horizons Under the Sea. (R) **2.00** Wanted Down Under Revision. (R) **2.45** Escape to the Country. (R) **3.30** Spy in the Wild. (R) **4.30** Songs of Praise. **5.05** Call the Midwife: The Casebook. **6.05** BBC News. **6.20** Regional Programme. **6.30** Countryfile. The programme comes from Carmarthenshire, where Matt Baker explores the history of the region's sand dunes and Helen Skelton visits the National Botanic Garden of Wales, where she discovers how bees are being prepared for winter and reports on a plan to map the DNA of all the UK's flowers. Plus: Falklands veteran Simon Weston presents a guide to South Wales, Tom Heap looks at how otters pose a threat to fisheries, and Adam Henson presents the second of two reports on farming in New Zealand, including weather for the week ahead. **7.30** Antiques Roadshow Holocaust Memorial. Fiona Bruce and the team examine items connected to the Holocaust and listen to the personal stories of survivors. Plus, a look at the work of the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation. **8.30** Still Open All Hours. David Jason stars as Granville in this follow-up to Open All Hours, now running the shop with his son Leroy after inheriting the business from Arkwright. **9.00** Sherlock. Sherlock and John face their greatest challenge as the duo's long-buried secrets come to light and a threat from the past seems to have returned from the dead. They discover an elusive enemy has been playing a very long game and John is now reaching its devastating conclusion. Benedict Cumberbatch and Martin Freeman star in the conclusion of the fourth series of the detective drama. Last in the series. **10.30** BBC News. **10.50** Regional Programme. **11.00** The Graham Norton Show. (R) **11.45** The Celebrity Apprentice USA. **1.10** Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.15** BBC News.

BBC2

- 6.15** A to Z of TV Gardening. (R) **7.00** Big Dreams Small Spaces. **8.00** An Island Parish. (R) **8.30** The Edible Garden. (R) **9.00** Confetti. (R) **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **11.30** Talking Snooker. **12.15** Masters. Ronnie O'Sullivan v Liang Wenbo. **5.15** Yellowstone: The Toughest Spring. (R) **6.15** Ski Sunday. Highlights of the Lauberhorn in Wengen, Switzerland. Plus, a feature on Swiss freerider, Jeremy Heitz. **7.00** City in the Sky. Dallas Campbell and Dr Hannah Fry present a documentary exploring aviation, beginning with a look at the challenges of getting aircraft into the air. The programme features a visit to the world's busiest airport to discover the work that goes into getting its millions of visitors off the ground. Plus, the construction of the world's largest passenger plane and the dangers of taking off from the coldest city in Europe. (R) **8.00** Dragons' Den. Evan Davis ushers another batch of would-be entrepreneurs before the panel's judgment. An inventor who claims to have created a new kind of surfboard and a paracutus for NASA presents his idea for transforming the garden shed. Touker Suleyman agrees to road test a waxing product, and one applicant makes a shocking revelation as he tells the story of sleeping on his office floor. **9.00** Thailand: Earth's Tropical Paradise. The mountains and forests of Northern Thailand, where unusual partnerships develop between animals and people. Last in the series. **10.00** Match of the Day. Mark Chapman reviews the day's Premier League action, featuring Manchester United v Liverpool at Old Trafford and Everton v Manchester City at Goodison Park. **10.50** QI XL. Guests Matt Lucas, Jerry Springer and Cariad Lloyd join regular panelist Alan Davies and host Sandi Toksvig to contemplate the theme "noodles" in this extended episode. **11.35** Snooker: The Masters. Ding Junhui v Kyren Wilson, Hazel Irvine presents action. **12.25** Snooker: The Masters - Extra. **2.25** Sign Zone: Question Time. (R) **3.25** Holby City. (R) **4.25** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

- 6.00** CITV: Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) **6.10** Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) **6.25** Dino Dan: Treks Adventures. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.45** Soay. (R) **6.55** Super 4. (R) **7.00** Super 4 & the Stowaway. (R) **7.00** Super 4. (R) **7.15** Oddbooks. (R) **7.20** Oddtods! (R) **7.30** Scrambled! Scrambled! 7.35 Scrambled!: Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **7.55** Scrambled!: Horrid Henry. (R) **8.10** Scrambled!: The Powerpuff Girls. (R) **8.30** Scrambled!: Ultimate Spider-Man: Web Warriors. (R) **9.05** Scrambled!: Adventure Time. (R) **9.15** ITV News. **9.30** Countrywise. (R) **10.00** Peston on Sunday. **11.00** Gino's Italian Escape: Hidden Italy. (R) **11.30** Chopping Block. (R) **12.30** ITV News: Weather. **12.35** Judge Rinder. (R) **1.35** Tipping Point. (R) **2.35** Ninja Warrior UK. (R) **3.35** The Voice UK. (R) **5.05** Regional Programme. **6.00** Weather. **5.15** ITV News: Weather. **5.30** The Chase: Celebrity Special. (R) **6.30** Dance Dance Dance. Alesha Dixon and Will Best host the second stage of the celebrity dance contest, in which the contestants must impress judges Ashley Banjo, Tina Landau and Tim Mewes by rewatching famous music videos by Christina Aguilera and Britney Spears – as well as a classic scene from the Blues Brothers. **8.00** Endeavour. The leader of a censorship campaign comes to Oxford on a speaking tour, and Morse is charged with protecting her in light of a series of death threats. A bricklayer working on a controversial pop singer's house is later found dead, and when a second killing occurs, a connection emerges to the speaker's movement, plunging Morse into the middle of a conflict over the nature of British culture. **10.00** ITV News: Weather. **10.15** Peston on Sunday. Political magazine, presented by Robert Peston, with ITV News National Editor Allegra Stratton. (R) **10.50** QI XL. Guests Matt Lucas, Jerry Springer and Cariad Lloyd join regular panelist Alan Davies and host Sandi Toksvig to contemplate the theme "noodles" in this extended episode. **11.35** Snooker: The Masters. Ding Junhui v Kyren Wilson, Hazel Irvine presents action. **12.25** Snooker: The Masters - Extra. **2.25** Sign Zone: Question Time. (R) **3.25** Holby City. (R) **4.25** This Is BBC Two.

CHANNEL 4

- 6.20** The King of Queens. (R) **6.45** The King of Queens. (R) **7.10** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.35** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.30** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Friends. (R) **9.30** Sunday Best. (R) **12.30** The Simpsons. (R) **12.55** The Simpsons. (R) **1.25** The Simpsons. (R) **1.55** Film: St Trinian's 2: The Legend of Fritton's Gold. (2009) Comedy sequel, starring Rupert Everett. **3.55** Channel 4 News. **4.15** Darts: BOO Lakeside World Professional Championships. The men's final of the BDO World Championships. **8.00** Walking the Americas. The second leg of Levison Wood's four-month trek across Central America involves walking for 400 miles and travelling through three different countries. He visits a unique Caribbean town that is populated by the descendants of shipwrecked African slaves, treks through a mountain region, and makes his way through gang territories in one of the world's most violent cities. **9.00** Film: Bad Neighbours. (2014) Premiere. A couple living in suburbia and adjusting to new parenthood are determined to prove they can still be cool when a household of students moves in next door. However, when their raucous neighbours' wild parties disrupt their lives, they decide to fight back, leading to a vicious cycle of one-upmanship. Comedy, starring Seth Rogen, Zac Efron and Rose Byrne. **10.50** 8 Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown. Comedy, presented by Sean Lock and Stephen Mangan team up against Nool Fielding and Fay Ripley. The Best Dommo Trix assist Susie Dent in Dictionary Corner. (R) **11.55** Film: Hanna. (2011) A teenage girl, trained by her father to be an assassin, travels the world on a secret mission, pursued by the CIA. Action thriller, with Saorise Ronan and Cate Blanchett. **1.55** How to Lose Weight Well. Dr Xand van Tulleken and dietician Hala El-Shafie help a duo slim down for a birthday bash in seven days, and water-only diets are investigated. (R) **2.50** The Autistic Gardener. The team tries to make a small garden look bigger. (R) **3.45** Jamie's Comfort Food. Jamie Oliver prepares curried fish pie. **3.55** Location, Location, Location. (R) **5.50** 3rd Rock from the Sun. (R)

CHANNEL 5

- 6.00** Milkshake!: Milkshake! Monkey. **6.05** Milkshake!: Bob Box. (R) **6.10** Peppa Pig. **6.15** Angelina Ballerina. (R) **6.25** Bob the Builder. (R) **6.45** Wanda the Alien. (R) **6.50** Zack and Quack. (R) **7.00** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **7.05** Fireman Sam. (R) **7.15** Pip Ahoy! (R) **7.30** Little Princess. (R) **7.40** Paw Patrol. **7.55** Blaze and the Monster Machines. (R) **8.25** Noddy in Toyland. (R) **8.40** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **8.55** Shimmer and Shine. (R) **9.20** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.30** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.40** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.55** The Fairly OddParents. (R) **10.30** Football on 5: The Championship. (R) **11.25** Football on 5: Goal Rush. (R) **12.00** Funniest Fails. Falls & Flips. (R) **12.25** Film: Message in a Bottle. (1999) Romantic drama, with Kevin Costner and Robin Wright. **2.50** Film: Six Days Seven Nights. (1998) Romantic adventure, starring Harrison Ford and Anne Heche. **4.45** Film: You've Got Mail. (1998) Romantic comedy, starring Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan. **7.00** Now That's Funny! A collection of internet-based videos with a family-friendly twist, bringing laugh-out-loud unexpected personal moments now being shared with the world. (R) **8.00** Bridges Make You Laugh Out Loud. Ian Lee narrates a collection of internet videos featuring bizarre and humorous weddings. **8.55** 5 News Weekend. **9.00** Celebrities Big Brother. A chance to compete with the best events inside the house as the celebrities cope with living under constant surveillance, with all the arguments and alliances, as well as the revelations in the diary room. **10.05** Celebrity Patched Up Bodies. Alex Reid undergoes surgery on his nose to help his breathing, while Georgie Shore's Marrie Simpson discusses how her breast enhancement went badly wrong. **11.05** The Roast of Donald Trump. An event from 2011 in which the business mogul faces a barrage of insults from Seth MacFarlane, Gilbert Gottfried, Whitney Cummings, Snoop Dogg, Larry King and Marlee Matlin. (R) **12.35** Impractical Jokers UK. **1.00** SuperCasino. **3.10** Film: Under the Tuscan Sun. (2003) **4.50** Divine Designs. (R) **5.40** Angels of Jarm. (R)

DIGITAL

- BBC Four** **7.00** David Starkey's Music & Monarchy **8.00** Sword, Musket & Machine Gun: Britain's Armed History **9.00** Rich Hall's Presidential Grudge Match **10.30** Bowie at the BBC **11.30** John Berger: The Art of Looking **12.25** Sound of Musicals with Neil Brand **1.25** Lost Kingdoms of Central America **2.25** Roger Bannister: Everest on the Track **3.25** Close **ITV2** **1.40** Awesome: Side Effects **2.20** 2Awesome: Third Wheel **2.40** 2Awesome: LA Story **3.00** Film: Space Jam (1996) **4.45** FYI Daily 4.05 Film: Space Jam (1996) **5.15** FYI Daily 5.50 Film: My 2 (2011) **5.45** FYI Daily 5.50 Film: Desperate Housewives (2004) **6.45** Film: The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey (2012) **7.45** FYI Daily 7.50 Film: The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey (2012) **8.00** You're Only Young Once **9.00** Young Twice **5.40** ITV2 Nighstcreen **ITV3** **2.05** A Touch of Frost **4.20** Film: Columbus: How to Dial a Murder (1978) **6.00** Midsummer Murders **8.00** This Time Next Year **9.00** Tonight at the London Palladium **10.00** Birds of a Feather **10.30** Film: The English Patient (1996) **11.35** FYI Daily 11.40 Film: The English Patient (1996) **1.40** A Touch of Frost **3.35** May the Best House Win **3.50** You're Only Young Twice **5.40** ITV3 Nighstreen **ITV4** **4.35** Film: The Dam Busters (1954) **5.35** FYI Daily 5.40 Film: The Dam Busters (1954) **7.10** When Ali Came to Britain **8.15** Film: Police Academy 4: Citizens on Patrol (1987) **9.15** FYI Daily 9.20 Film: Police Academy 4: Citizens on Patrol (1987) **10.00** Film: Maximum Conviction (2012) **11.00** FYI Daily 11.05 Film: Maximum Conviction (2012) **12.05** River Monsters **1.10** Hold on Wheels **2.05** I Want That Car **2.55** ITV4 Nighstreen **3.00** Teleshopping **5.45** ITV2 Nighstreen **Film4** **2.20** Rude(ish) Tube Shorts **2.30** The Goldberg's **5.00** The Big Bang Theory **8.00** Film: Johnny English Reborn (2011) **10.05** Tattoo Fixers **11.10** Virtually Famous **12.00** The Inbetweeners **1.05** Gogglebox **2.10** Rude Tube: Ultimate Stunts **3.05** Rude Tube **9.00** Prometheus (2012)

Dudley Chronicle Thursday, January 12, 2017

Aston's Auctioneers & Valuers

Featured Lots

(left) Apple iPhone 6 gold, to be sold on behalf of West Midlands Police
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(right) The Great Escape first release original British Quad film poster.
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- * Hornby & other Model Railways and Model Kits inc. Airfix.
- * Designer Clothes & Handbags - Vintage & Modern Fashion.
- * Film & Music Memorabilia inc. Cinema Posters & Vinyl Records.
- * Comic Books including Marvel, DC, Batman, Spider-Man etc.
- * Cameras, Lenses & Photographic Equipment inc. Leica & Nikon.



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Auctions in January

Tuesday 17th January at 10am General & Collectables Auction

Includes West Midlands Police Stolen & Recovered Property, Lost & Found Property & items seized under the Proceeds of Crime Act as well as antiques & collectables from estate clearance.

Tuesday 17th January at 2pm Film & Music Memorabilia Auction

Includes the Film Poster Collection of the late Brian O'Connor - as featured in the Daily Mail.

Thursday 19th January at 10am Toy & Model Railway Auction

Includes a gigantic model kit collection inc. early Airfix & more.

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FILM CHOICES**MONDAY****Mother Betrayed, Channel 5, 3.20pm**

Five years after her husband is run off the road and killed by a mysterious driver, the head of a prosperous architectural firm decides to remarry. However, she's unaware that her new spouse has a devious plan to steal her daughter, her sanity and even her life. Psychological thriller, starring Lynn Collins. (2015)

TUESDAY**Who Killed My Husband?, Channel 5, 3.15pm**

A widowed police officer embarks on a dangerous mission to generate enough income to pay for her daughter's hospital bills, causing her to question how far she is willing to go to save her child. Thriller, starring Andrea Bowen and Jim Thorburn. (1900)

WEDNESDAY**What Doesn't Kill You, BBC1, 11.45pm**

Two childhood friends become criminals in the employ of a Boston mobster, leading one to develop a drug habit that nearly costs him his wife and children. After a spell in prison, he resolves to make a fresh start as a devoted family man, but his friend tempts him with the promise of an armoured car robbery. Crime drama, starring Mark Ruffalo. (2008)

**Reasonable Doubt, Friday, BBC1, 11.55pm****THURSDAY****Twisted Sisters, Channel 5, 3.15pm**

College freshman Sarah joins her mother's former sorority, but comes to learn it is run like a ruthless business rather than a sisterhood, promoting cut-throat seduction and destruction behind the scenes. As a consequence, she soon finds herself caught up in a devious power game that forces her to question where her true loyalties lie. Drama, starring Sierra McCormick and Cassidy Gifford. (2016)

FRIDAY**Reasonable Doubt, BBC1, 11.55pm**

District attorney Mitch Brockden is involved in a fatal hit-and-run incident, and a convicted felon is charged with his crime. Mitch's guilt drives him to throw out the case when it comes to trial – but when the accused later goes on a killing spree, he feels compelled to bring him to justice personally. Crime thriller, starring Dominic Cooper and Samuel L Jackson. (2014)

Lucy's decision proves far from child's play

Lee Mack once said that if Lee and Lucy got together it would be the end of this show.

So after the pair's surprise Christmas marriage in 2015, fans thought they'd probably seen the last of hit comedy series. Mack's career has gone from strength to strength and he is now established as one of the UK's most recognisable comedians.

Last year saw him return as resident team captain on *Would I Lie To You?*, host *Duck Quacks Don't Echo*, while in 2017 he will make his London West End debut alongside Griff Rhys Jones in *The Miser*.

But despite these other commitments, thankfully, Mack changed his mind about the show in which he made his name, and *Not Going Out* remains the longest-running UK television sitcom still on-air.

Plus, a ninth and 10th series have also been green-lit by the Beeb, so Lee and Lucy (Sally Bretton) are not going anywhere just yet.

One thing that perhaps changed Mack's mind was a shift in direction for the sitcom, which now features more

of a family element instead of the offbeat romantic comedy theme which dominated its first decade.

In the 10 years since *Not Going Out* began, Mack has himself become a father of three.

"It is quite weird writing about family life," he admitted in a TV interview last year. "We've slowed it down a bit, less heaving and more children's nappies."

Shane Allen, Controller of Comedy Commissioning at the BBC, is thrilled that Lee and Lucy are back: "Not Going Out is on its way to modern classic status as it clocks up another richly gag-packed and comic incident-heavy series."

"The jump forward introduction of their kids provides Lee and Lucy with a new family domestic setting and springboard to broaden out their world from a 'will they, won't they?' dynamic to the 'why the hell have we?' that comes with parenting."

At the end of the last run, Lee and Lucy were a newlywed couple having their first child.

Fast forward seven years, and there are some major new additions to their

chaotic world – baby Charlie now has five-year-old twin siblings, Benji and Molly.

So how has Lee survived these dramatic life changes? And how are the parents finding the joy/re relentless onslaught of bringing up kids?

If this wasn't enough for them to contend with, come the with tricky family members in the form of Lee's labile and useless father Frank (Bobby Ball), and close friends including the world-weary, or more specifically wife-weary, Toby (Hugh Dennis) and upright ice-queen Anna (Abigail Cruttenden).

Thankfully, Lucy's parents Geoffrey (Geoffrey Whitehead) and Wendy (Deborah Grant) are on hand.

But what exactly do they make of Lee and Lucy's often mad house?

Last week we saw Lee trying to get the 'romance' with his wife back on track.

And in this second instalment, Lucy causes grave offence by choosing the wrong babysitter for their trio of offspring when the couple plan a night on the tiles.

**Bobby Ball and Lee Mack star in Not Going Out, Friday, BBC1, 9.30pm**

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY**The Undateables****Channel 4, 9pm**

Many of us have difficulty navigating the unwritten rules of dating, but it's been particularly hard for 22-year-old Jamie, whose Asperger syndrome means he struggles to understand anything that isn't logical. However, he does have a passion for military history and strategy so as he takes his first steps into the world of relationships, he is armed with a plan. Luke, 26, from Hampshire, who is autistic, also believes in being prepared when it comes to love – although he sometimes finds it hard to make conversation, he's taught himself phrases in 15 different languages. But will his linguistic skills impress his date Alice, or will something be lost in translation? Meanwhile, Lizzie, 29, has a learning disability that means she struggles with some everyday tasks, but she still loves to shop – and she's now in the market for a boyfriend.

TUESDAY**How to Lose Weight Well****Channel 4, 8pm**

Dr Xand van Tulleken, Hala El-Shafie help more dieters tackle weight-loss regimes. They begin by meeting Stefanie and Jade from Harrow who have

just 10 days to slim down before the launch of their clothing label. Jade tests a low-fat diet, while sugar addict Stefanie must survive on foods that don't contain the sweet stuff. Later, the duo challenge fast-food fan Matt from Redditch to test a 'warrior' diet, which involves eating like a Roman soldier. And finally Rob from the Wirral tries a 'Sleeping Beauty' regime, in the hope that sleeping more will help his body optimise the hormones that control his metabolism and appetite. But will there be a happy ever after as far as his diet is concerned?

WEDNESDAY
No Offence
Channel 4, 9pm

The second series of Paul Abbott's Manchester-set police comedy-drama continues. As no-nonsense DI Viv Deering (Joanna Scanlan) and impulsive DC Dinah Kowalska (Elaine Cassidy) search for the people who are helping local gang the Attahs, including its fearsome leader Norah (Rakie Ayola), in child exploitation, they uncover tensions within the family that could lead to a breakthrough in the case. However, when the team

is called to an armed robbery at a pub in a converted bank, it soon escalates into a life-threatening hostage situation. Elsewhere, PC Jonah Mitchell (Ste Johnson) pursues a man posing as a pedophile with a knack of slipping through legal loopholes.

THURSDAY
Spy in the Wild
BBC1, 8pm

Undercover cameras help to explore the world of animal intelligence, ingenuity and creativity in their hunting, protection and health. Spy Orang-utan meets her real-life counterparts in Borneo to capture how, living close to local people, they have gained unexpected skills in sawing wood and washing with soap, while Spy Termite catches one of the world's cleverest animal tricksters, the drongo, as he tries to outwit a group of meerkats in the battle for food.

Unforgotten, Thursday, ITV, 9pm**Express & Star**

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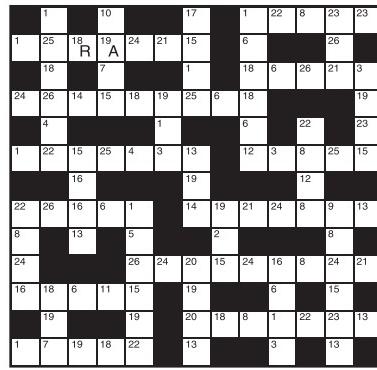
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*All prices are subject to VAT

BRAIN GYM No.411

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
N	T	V	H	A	W	K	C	R	X	U	E	O
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
S	D	Z	Q	J	L	M	I	F	P	B	Y	G

Quiz

- What does the M stand for in JMW Turner?
- What do we call a quasi-autonomous non-governmental organisation?
- Which actor's first names are John Uhler III?
- Which plant has bird's-foot and hop varieties?
- By which king was the inch defined in statute?
- In which year was Greenpeace founded?
- To which region was Cain exiled after he had killed Abel?
- In which country are the Plains of Abraham?
- Which city lies on the north side of the Firth of Tay?
- To which flower family does vanilla belong?

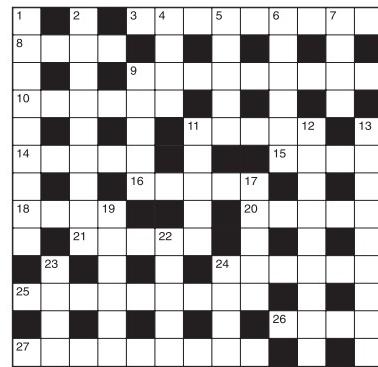
Last week's solutions:
Quiz: 1 Pig; 2 David Blunkett; 3 Imperial War Museum; 4 W C Fields; 5 North Atlantic; 6 Dandelion; 7 God Save the Queen; 8 Kevin Keegan; 9 Phil Spector; 10 Ink blots.
Niner: COUNTRIES

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

Cryptic Clues:
Across

- Foreign food - make the GP eat it! (9)
- Proper ones appear in the real estate market (4)
- Goals, i.e., as a ruler (9)
- This will smooth out the wave (6)
- It's mounted when differently set by the editor (5)
- The yarn in the novel is legendary (5)
- One who is entertained arrives at the right conclusion, one hears (5)
- One by one (6)
- Closely follows trite quotations (4)
- One who tasks together a waste disposal unit (5)
- One who calls out mother returning to Greek island (5)
- Thorough antonym of up left (9)
- Finding a logical cause, as one is upset in the arena (9)
- Split associated with tenanted houses (5)
- One in a strange sect makes a quotation (5)
- Illuminated one supplicated prayer of supplication (6)
- There's no start to famine - this produces food (5)
- A maid to spoil a Scotsman! (6)
- One in unspoil surroundings, like a bachelor (9)
- Avoid a colloquial word of command (4)
- The stage property is a toy (9)



Quick Clues:

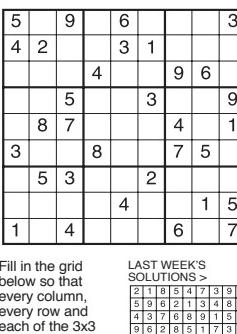
Across

- Pen-name (9)
- Detail (4)
- In utter poverty (9)
- Diminish (6)
- Maxim (5)
- Foster (5)
- Authentic (4)
- Dance (5)
- Retailed (4)
- Well (5)
- Give up (5)
- Drive (6)
- Harmonise (9)
- Daybreak (4)
- Dispute (9)

Down

- Fiddler (9)
- Unhurried (9)
- Observed (4)
- Unfasten (5)
- Start (6)
- Abominable snowman (4)
- Postpone (5)
- Shy (5)
- Celebrating victory (9)
- Deadly (9)
- Burning (5)
- Repudiate (6)
- Regional (5)
- Equipment (4)
- Plot (4)

Sudoku

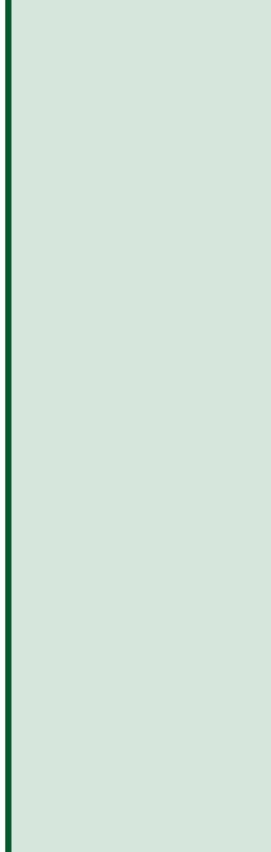


Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >
 2 1 8 5 4 7 3 9 6
 5 9 6 2 1 3 4 8 7
 4 3 7 6 9 1 5 2
 9 6 2 8 5 1 7 3 4
 8 1 3 5 2 4 6 7 1
 3 4 9 7 2 6 1 8
 6 8 1 4 3 5 2 7 9
 7 2 9 1 6 8 5 4 3

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS:
 CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Away; 3 Trophies; 8 Vert; 9 Impaled; 11 Consequences; 13 Treaty; 14 Salami; 17 Reinvestment; 20 Latitude; 21 Dock; 22 Believer; 23 Sets. Down: 1 Advocate; 2 Arrange; 4 Rumpus; 5 Plain facts; 6 In the; 7 Side; 10 Getting the; 12 Mistakes; 15 Quilt; 16 Tarnished; 18 Hobo; 19 Club; QUIK - Across: 1 Pull; 3 Stretches; 5 Inch; 9 Pruderie; 11 Affectionate; 13 Cancer; 14 Divide; 17 Impertinence; 20 Take away; 21 Abed; 22 Horseman; 23 Bear. Down: 1 Parfance; 2 Lucifer; 4 Afraid; 5 Intentions; 6 Adult; 7 Eden; 10 Accelerate; 12 Defender; 15 Ignoble; 16 Strata; 18 Maker; 19 Itch.

Thinking space



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Sat 18th - Sun 19th Mar - Faulty Towers Comedy Show - London Weekend, 3 course meal included during your show. Based at the Quality Inn, Wembley. Optional evening's entertainment at the Irish Bar! We also take in historic Windsor on our journey to London. Fun weekend at only £149.50pp*

Fri 7th - Mon 10th Apr - The English Riviera - Babacombe 4 days, 3 nights half Board at The De La Mer Hotel. Day excursions to Teignmouth, Brixham and Torquay are also included. We visit historic Exeter on our return journey. Only £176.00*

Fri 21st - Mon 24th Apr - Paris and Monet's Garden, 4 days, 3 nights B & B at the 4 star Novotel. Excursions to Paris, Monet's Garden and Giverny - True in the serenity of the River Seine before relaxing in Paris. We also visit the former home of Claude Monet and its beautiful gardens. Includes Eurotunnel crossing - executive coach travel and admission to Monet's gardens. Only £245.00* Passport/Euro's required

Fri 26th - Monday 29th May - Hadrian's Wall and Bamburgh. Situated a stone's throw from Hadrian's Wall the Gosland Hall Hotel is an ideal base to explore the wonderful scenery. Your holiday includes visits to Carlisle, Gretna Green, the stunningly attractive village of Bamburgh famed for its castle and historic Lancaster on our journey home. Not to be missed - Only £245.00pp*

Fri 2nd - Mon 5th June - Bruges and Ypres - Bruges, the capital of West Flanders is distinguished by its canals, cobbled Streets and medieval buildings. Excursions to Ypres, Ghent and Ostend, Eurotunnel Crossing and taxes are all included in the cost of your holiday. Please join us as we witness the emotional Last Post at the Menin Gate. A memorable holiday for only £266.00pp*

Mon 24th - Fri 29th July - Waterford, Killarney & Dublin

Please join us for the 'Craic' as we take in the delights of the Emerald Isle. Based at the Euston House Hotel in the heart of Killarney this is a great place to explore. We take in The Kingdom of Kerry, Dublin, Blarney Castle and much more. Whether it's Kissing the Blarney Stone or riding the famous Irish Jaunting Cars this is a holiday not to be missed. Only £416.00pp*

Fri 8th - Sun 10th Sept - Blackpool Illuminations and Fireworks Display 3 days - 2 nights half board at the ever popular Carn brae with entertainment - Free time in Blackpool - leisure time at the award winning Trentham Gardens on our return journey. Only £145.00pp* (Limited single rooms without supplement)

Fri 13th - Mon 16th Oct - Bournemouth Autumn Tints

Based at the historic Victorian Durley Dean Hotel situated close to the award winning beach - 3 days - 2 nights half board - Excursions to Poole and Swanage - Free bar between 7 - 9pm - We also visit Winchester on our return Journey. Only £226.00pp*

Fri 17th - Mon 20th Nov - Turkey & Tinsel

at the Monterey Beach Hotel Christmas has come early as we enjoy the festivities at the Monterey Beach Hotel close to Lytham ST Annes. Mince Pies, Crackers and a visit from Santa on this fun filled weekend. Complimentary drink - 4 day-3 nights' accommodation - Evening entertainment - We visit the award winning Trentham Gardens on our return journey to pick up your Mistletoe! Only £189.00* (Limited single rooms without supplement)

Mon 27th - Fri 1st Dec - Valkenburg Christmas Market

Held in the famous underground Grotto Valkenburg Christmas market is a fantastic place to be. 5 day - 4 nights half board accommodation - Day excursion to Leige, the largest festive market in Belgium. Your break takes in Holland, Germany and Belgium. Excursion to the illuminated trees and fairy lights of Monschau. Only £296.00*

DAY TRIPS - SEASIDE - CONCERTS - THEATRES AND MANY MORE!

Just a few of our great days out

18th Feb - Cheshire Oaks	£19.50
25th Mar - The Shard	£49.50
25th Mar - London 'Do as you Please'	£23.00
26th Mar - Mother's Day Ruin! Bombay Sapphire Gin Tour	£36.50
19th Apr - An American in Paris - London Theatre	£75.00
19th Apr - DreamGirls the Musical - London Theatre	£75.00
23rd Apr - Brecon Mountain Railway	£33.50
29th Apr - Kensington Palace 'Diana, Her Fashion Story'	£37.50
6th May - Hull, City of Culture - The Weeping Window	£24.00
7th May - Emmerdale 'The Tour'	£44.00
17th June - Cliff Richard in Concert at Eastnor Castle	£99.00
14th July - Olly Murs in Concert at Northampton Arena	£79.50
5th Aug - Buckingham Palace Tour	£40.00
6th Aug - Llandudno via the Horseshoe Pass	£22.00
13th Aug - Kettlewell Scarecrow Festival	£25.00
19th Aug - Oxford and Blenheim Palace	£99.00
20th Aug - Porthcawl 'Sunday by the Sea'	£21.00
24th Aug - Althorp House	£37.00
3rd Sept - Heartbeat & Whitby	£25.50
24th Oct - London's Monopoly Challenge	£24.00



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An angel overlooks Lake Malaren, Sormland



The picturesque town of Mariefred



Dawn over Lake Malaren in Mariefred, Sormland



Maria Printz, owner of the Printz bakery in Stallarholmen

How Sweden harnesses delight of simple but joyous traditions

WINNING a Nobel Prize could arguably be the best Christmas present of all. But not for lyricist Bob Dylan, one of this year's best-known laureates.

"He won't even be coming to the ceremony," my taxi driver complains as we whirl through snow-dusted cobbled streets below Stockholm's City Hall. He has other plans, apparently.

Three days after the grand December 10 banquet, honoured guests are woken from their rooms at the prestigious Grand Hotel by singing angels carrying candles, part of the St Lucia tradition. It's fair to say Mr Tambourine Man won't be in their repertoire... No matter, the show will go on.

Swedes honour traditions with clockwork precision, something I discover on a weekend winter break to their capital city and its

Sarah Marshall reports

surrounding areas. Fleeing the commercialised circus of high-street chaos, I surface in a world of clean, crisp sophistication, where flashing rainbow lights and tacky tinsel are superseded by simple lingonberry wreaths and the flickering gold flames of advent candles.

It's Christmas time, and the markets have sprung up in the city. One of the most atmospheric is held at Hovstallet, the Royal Stable. Stooping in a loose-fitting tartan blazer, equestrian Lars shows me the king's private property, which is open for public tours throughout the year.

"This is Stockholm's best kept secret," he whispers, as we weave through ornate royal carriages and past pedigree horses nuzzling into their mangers, entering a room filled with 38 gleaming harnesses.

"Every year, two are flown by hand luggage to your Buckingham Palace, where skilled craftsmen make repairs," Lars tells me. "We give the horses these jingle bells to wear in winter so they can be heard by traffic when the sound of their hooves is deadened by snow."

Inventive

As the morning wears on, shoppers pour into the sky-lit Riding Hall and a labyrinth of stables, where stalls sell national favourites such as smoked fish, marzipan pigs and a parade of inventive condiments.

Sheepskin rugs and cushions spiral with tight silky curls, and toy elves peer from an unkempt tangle of felt and wool. Ice scrapers with knitted handles are my novelty gift find of the day. Most people are gathering goods for their Christmas table. But to discover an even greater selection of produce,

I head to the bread basket region of Sormland, a 45-minute journey from Stockholm by train. Residents of Stallarholmen are hosting a Charles Dickens-themed market, with carol singers gathered around a log fire and aromas of roast pork.

Gregarious baker Maria Printz is doing a roaring trade in sticky cinnamon buns and saffron cakes, traditionally eaten at this time of year.

Many of the local meats, cheeses and smoked fish make their way into a traditional julbord (a Swedish smorgasbord) served at Gripsholms Vardshus, a cosy inn located in nearby Mariefred. Vodka-infused salmon, herring pickled with fennel, and a salty roast gammon are all highlights.

I learn more about the origins of this former Viking settlement at the Callanderska Garden folklore centre, a 274-year-old red clapperboard house.

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PROPERTY

YOUR WEEKLY
GUIDE TO HOME
BUYING AND
LETTING

Modern detached family home is on a private drive

A splendid modern detached family home on a private drive, 2b Terrace Street, Brierley Hill, lies set back around 45 metres from the road.

A property that really needs to be viewed in order to be fully appreciated; it is for sale through Trinity Property at £219,950 with no chain.

The property has a large garage and private gated off road parking to the front leading to the front door. From the entrance hall there are stairs to the first floor and a door to the downstairs WC and a large under-stairs cupboard.

There is also a large lounge with a wall mounted electric fire, a dining room - with both of the former rooms having patio doors to the rear garden - and a spacious modern fitted kitchen.

On the first floor the landing has an airing cupboard and further doors to five good sized bedrooms, with the master bedroom having an en-suite shower/WC room off. There is also a large house bathroom/WC with a bath and separate shower.

The property is fitted with a Fire Sprinkler System throughout.

Outside is a garden and a garage which has an up and over door to the front, a side door leading to a side alley and fittings for a washing machine.

Trinity Property bring a fresh, friendly and honest approach to selling, buying and letting property within the Dudley and Stourbridge area. Offering free market appraisals, great EPC prices, all aspects of property letting and management; we are based in central Dudley and cover Kingswinford, Wordsley, Netherton, Sedgley, Tipton and Tividale and more, with a business built on recommendation.

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BRIERLEY HILL £219,950



TO VIEW THIS PROPERTY

AGENT: Trinity Property

TEL: 01384 213395

EMAIL: angel@trinityproperty.net

KEY FEATURES

Detached

5 bedrooms

2 reception rooms

Large garage & parking

Bathroom & en-suite



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SEDGLEY, Dumbleberry Avenue, Brownwall estate

TREMENDOUS POTENTIAL! Enviable situated, gas centrally heated, gas centrally heated & double glazed DETACHED requiring sympathetic updating in favoured district occupying a large plot comprising; porch, hall, store, lounge with bay, dining room, kitchen, lobby, lengthily utility room/store. Three bedrooms, bathroom, W.C. Large (24 ft) garage, good sized secluded rear garden. EPC: F SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £240,000



SEDGLEY, Northway

Impressive, spacious, conscientiously maintained, Freehold, gas centrally heated, double glazed semi detached bungalow upon generous corner plot within walking distance of so many day-to-day amenities comprising; porch, hall, kitchen, 18'3" living/dining room, two bedrooms (one with units), reappointed bathroom, conservatory, secluded rear garden, garage, driveway. EPC: TBA SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £204,950



DUDLEY, Attingham Drive

NO UPWARD CHAIN! A fantastically presented & superbly maintained intermediate starter home situated on highly popular 'Sovereign Heights' development in Dudley benefitting from entrance hall, double glazing, and mains gas central heating, this modern residence also comprises; guest wc, living room, fitted kitchen, bathroom, TWO BEDROOMS, and parking. Viewing is highly recommended. EPC TBA SEDGLEY

PRICE £119,950



LOWER GORNAL, Shakespeare Road, Straits

Spacious, Freehold, gas centrally heated (combi boiler) & majority upVC double glazed detached bungalow within reasonable walking distance of so many day-to-day amenities briefly comprising; porch, central reception hall, cloaks, THREE BEDROOMS, bathroom, lounge, breakfast kitchen, pantry, store, through lobby. Brick garage (automated door), secluded rear garden. EPC: D SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £215,000



WOODSETTON, Calder Rise

Attractive, meticulously maintained, freehold, gas centrally heated, UPVC DOUBLE GLAZED Detached in short favoured cul-de-sac. Comprising: Reception hall, fitted cloakroom, lounge, dining room, refitted kitchen with a fine range of units and integrated appliances, three bedrooms, re-appointed shower room (former bathroom) lengthly garage with external parking, landscaped low maintenance rear garden. EPC: C SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £215,000



KINGSWINFORD, Ragese Road

Enjoying distant rear views from this pleasant cul de sac, this EXTENDED & GREATLY ENLARGED MODERN THREE BEDROOM DETACHED BUNGALOW offers an exceptionally spacious layout, including a CONSERVATORY EXTENSION, plus a block paved driveway and a tiered rear garden. EPC: E

No upward chain

£184,950



DUDLEY, Balmoral View, Milking Bank

Significantly enhanced, improved, Freehold gas centrally heated 'oak effect' UPVC double glazed detached at head of driveway offering further potential accommodation includes porch, hallway, lounge, breakfast kitchen, store, activities room, inner office section, cloakroom. Three bedrooms, bathroom with white contemporary style suite, garden. EPC: D SEDGLEY.

Offers in the region of £180,000



HIMLEY, Churns Hill Lane

For those of 55 years and over, this SUPERB ATTRACTIVELY APPOINTED TWO BEDROOM MEWS BUNGALOW is pleasantly located and offers a spacious layout which is READY TO MOVE INTO and enhanced by a CONSERVATORY, plus OFF-ROAD PARKING and a beautifully landscaped garden. EPC: C

£180,000



PENNETT, Smithy Lane

Superbly located upon the Pennett/Gornal border with a private front outlook and a secluded rear aspect, this INDIVIDUAL DETACHED BUNGALOW outwardly remains MOST DECEPTIVE of the INCREDIBLY SPACIOUS layout of accommodation which requires updating and includes TWO LARGE DOUBLE BEDROOMS EPC E

No upward chain

£179,950



KINGSWINFORD, Aretha Close

An IMPRESSIVE SEMI DETACHED BUNGALOW, superbly located within a sought after cul de sac, offering a WELL PRESENTED and GENEROUS LAYOUT of accommodation which includes TWO GOOD BEDROOMS. With LARGE DRIVEWAY, Detached Garage and a private rear garden. EPC TBA

£175,000



UPPER GORNAL, Pale Street

SUPERB, NEW BUILD, gas centrally heated, double glazed dormer style detached with flexible room arrangements. Conveniently situated, the accommodation comprises; hall, stylish BATHROOM, double bedroom, magnificent 'hub of the house' 19 ft living/dining room/kitchen. To first floor is a large 7'0" principal bedroom with shower room en suite. Parking, gardens, distant views. EPC: SAP: B. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £171,950



KINGSWINFORD, Bobeche Place

Located upon sought after Himley View, this SUPERB THREE BEDROOM SEMI-DETACHED FAMILY HOUSE was constructed in 2014 by Taylor Wimpey and offers a beautifully appointed layout including an EN-SUITE, plus a DRIVEWAY and an attractively laid out garden. EPC: C

£165,000



LOWER GORNAL, Mount Close

Good sized & conscientiously maintained semi-detached is enviably situated on Mount Close in the sought after Lower Gornal area of Dudley. Benefiting from central heating and double glazing this family home also boasts; entrance hall, living room, conservatory, kitchen, utility room, THREE BEDROOMS, family bathroom with separate W/C, landscaped rear garden and driveway to front. EPC: C SEDGLEY.

Offers in the region of £165,000



COSLEY, Upper Ettingshall Road

FANTASTIC - Exceptionally stylish, gas centrally heated, double glazed detached bungalow that has been transformed in recent years by present vendors to a stunning specification comprising; hall, refitted kitchen leading into a transverse lounge/orangery addition, Three bedrooms, shower room. Lengthy garden. VIEWING HIGHLY RECOMMENDED. EPC: D. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £154,950



LOWER GORNAL, Summer Lane

This good sized, centrally heated, EXTENDED family home is conveniently situated in the Lower Gornal area of Dudley. Sited on a corner position, this SEMI DETACHED home also boasts; entrance hallway, living room, sitting room, kitchen, family bathroom, three bedrooms, front and rear gardens, detached garage and parking, NO UPWARD CHAIN. EPC: D SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £130,000



WOODSETTON, Duncroft Walk

A conscientiously maintained freehold gas centrally heated and majority upVC double glazed semi detached with potential 'tucked away' in quiet backwater overlooking open space yet convenient for so many day-to-day amenities. Entrance hallway, lounge, transverse breakfast kitchen, 'garden room'; three bedrooms, bathroom; sheltered low maintenance rear garden with GARAGE and gated driveway. EPC Rating D SEDGLEY.

Offers in the region of £129,950



SEDGLEY, Holborn House, High Holborn

A 'loft-style' gas centrally heated and double glazed TWO BEDROOM duplex apartment (with gated access to secure parking and walking distance of so many amenities). Accommodation provides imposing reception hall, fitted cloakroom, living room, dining room and a transverse breakfast kitchen, 'garden room'; three bedrooms, bathroom; sheltered low maintenance rear garden with GARAGE and gated driveway. EPC: C SEDGLEY.

Offers in the region of £100,000



UPPER GORNAL, Quarry Brow

FOR IMPROVEMENT - a Freshold, upVC single glazed end "starter home" requiring comprehensive modernisation set in popular/convenient district. Accommodation includes; reception hall, living room, kitchen, pantry, bathroom, outer lobby, store, separate w.c. Three bedrooms. Potential off road parking to front, sheltered rear garden. BEST & FINAL OFFERS TO BE RECEIVED BY 12.00 NOON ON MONDAY 16TH JANUARY 2017. EPC: F SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £75,000



Four-bed detached in excellent condition

TETTENHALL
£300,000

This modern four-bedrooomed detached house in Woodcote Road, Tettenhall, Wolverhampton is in an excellent condition.

Within a short distance of Tettenhall Village, it is for sale through Paul Dubberley at £300,000.

Its accommodation briefly comprises an entrance hallway, a downstairs WC, lounge, dining room, modern breakfast kitchen with integral appliances, conservatory, modern bathroom, driveway, car-port and garage, front and rear gardens, double glazing and central heating. In more detail the entrance hall has wooden flooring and the lounge overlooks the front, having a gas fire and French doors to the conservatory.

Contact Paul Dubberley on 01902 633323 or visit www.pauldubberley.co.uk



Traditional semi-detached is recently refurbished

PENN
£209,950

<<<

Having been recently refurbished throughout, this traditional three-bedroomed semi-detached property in Links Road, Penn, is for sale through Skitts at £209,950 with no chain.

Having off road parking and modern and stylish accommodation, interior viewings are highly recommended.

Having been refurbished to a particularly high standard, it is situated in a highly desirable location and local to a range of amenities. The well presented and stylish family home benefits from central heating, double glazing, a living room plus a sun room, a dining kitchen, a downstairs WC and a modern bathroom on the first floor. There is off road parking to the front for two or three vehicles, and a private and enclosed garden to the rear.

Contact Skitts on 01902 788188 or visit www.skitts.net

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SEDGLEY



Wolverhampton Road.

- A beautiful dormer Bungalow
- IDEAL FAMILY HOME**
- Set among extensive grounds
- Excellent condition

- Three/four bedrooms
- Snooker Room
- Two garages
- EPC Rating - E

GUIDE PRICE £315,000

WOMBOURNE



Hazel Grove.

- A delightful Bungalow
- THREE bedroom detached
- Walking Distance to Village
- Completely renovated to

- Brand new Kitchen
- Two Brand new bathrooms
- Landscaped garden
- VIEWING RECOMMENDED**

OFFERS IN THE REGION OF £284,950

UPPER GORNAL



Ct Street.

- A DETACHED home
- Three bedrooms
- Open plan kitchen diner

- Driveway and Garage
- Pleasant cul-de-sac
- EPC Rating - D

OFFERS IN THE REGION OF £174,950

WOLVERHAMPTON



Corringay Drive.

- Modern semi detached
- Attractive, well presented
- Breakfast Kitchen
- THREE-bedroom
- EN-SUITE
- Ideal for first time buyers
- Guest WC
- NO UPWARD CHAIN
- EPC Rating - C

OFFERS IN THE REGION OF £144,950

COSELEY



Rush Road, Wombles.

- A traditional style 3 bed semi
- Close by to local schools
- Ideal family home
- Open plan kitchen diner
- Lounge & conservatory
- THREE bedrooms
- Low maintenance garden
- Viewing highly recommended
- EPC Rating - D

OFFERS IN THE REGION OF £131,950

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Snow Crescent, Wombles.

- A well presented semi-det
- Brand new Kitchen
- Downstairs WC
- Three bedrooms
- Well maintained garden
- Block paved drive
- Ideal first time buy
- Epc Rating - D

OFFERS IN THE REGION OF £139,950

COSELEY



Calverley Road.

- Mid-terrace property presented to a **VERY HIGH STANDARD**
- AN IDEAL FIRST TIME BUY**
- TWO DOUBLE bedrooms
- Guest Cloakroom/WC
- Lounge and large modern kitchen/diner
- Upvc double glazing
- Driveway providing off road parking with Integral garage
- EPC Rating - D

£34,950

41 DUDLEY STREET, SEDGLEY



Dormston Lodge.

- A most attractive, modern, ground floor 2 bedroom apartment
- Conveniently situated in the heart of Sedgley Town.
- Well proportioned and well presented.
- Parking area.
- Electric gates to both front & rear.
- EPC Rating - D

ASKING PRICE £117,950

HIGH HOLBORN, SEDGLEY



Holton House.

- A most attractive duplex apartment
- Studied in the heart of Sedgley Town.
- Uniquely designed layout over 2 floors.
- Features double height ceilings
- One bedroom and two bathrooms
- Another reception room (office/bedroom)
- Commercial ROOF TERRACE
- Secure parking area
- AN IDEAL FIRST TIME BUY
- EPC Rating - C

OFFERS IN THE REGION OF £114,950

LOW LEVEL STATION,



Broad Gauge Way.

- A Top Floor Apartment
- Modern & Contemporary
- Whon City Centre location
- Walking distance to Station
- Two double bedrooms
- En-suite and bathroom
- Balcony
- EPC Rating - D

OFFERS IN THE REGION OF £109,950

UPPER GORNAL



Duke Street.

- NO UPWARD CHAIN.
- Traditional style mid terrace.
- Located in Upper Gornal with Great distant views.
- Two double bedrooms
- En-suite and bathroom
- Lounge and separate dining room
- EPC Rating - D

£104,950

SEDGLEY



Clementine Cottages.

- A semi-detached Bungalow
- ONE double bedroom
- Driveway parking
- Walking-distance to Sedgley
- Ideal for downsizing
- Rear garden
- EPC Rating - TBC

OFFERS IN THE REGION OF £164,950

LOWER GORNAL



Parkhouse Gardens.

- A well presented FLAT
- Open plan accommodation
- Updated and contemporary
- One double bedrooms
- Communal rear garden
- EPC Rating - C

OFFERS IN THE REGION OF £72,000

KINGSWINFORD



Wanted Bank.

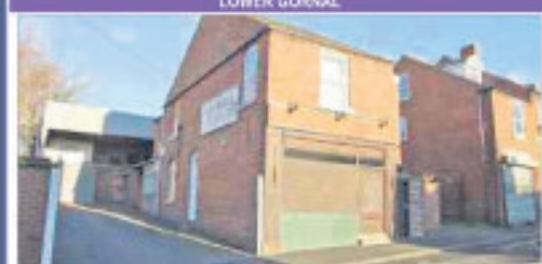
- TO LET
- A fantastic Semi-detached
- THREE bedrooms
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- Well kept rear garden
- NO DSS NO PETS

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LOWER GORNAL



9 Lake Street.

- A first floor flat
- ONE double bedroom
- Lounge and Kitchen
- Excellent location for amenities
- NO DSS, NO PETS
- EPC Rating - G

£320 PCM

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This attractive period family home is in a popular area

STOURBRIDGE

£389,950 >>>

In a tree lined setting within the renowned old quarter, this fine period abutted detached family home in South Avenue Old Quarter, Stourbridge has a great layout and many features.

Plus, it comes with a garage approached from the rear.

The property is for sale through Taylors at £389,950.

Complemented by a large rear garden it has a reception hall with Minton tile floor, a guests cloakroom/WC, a sitting room with original deep coving, a separate dining room with original period features, a breakfast kitchen, a rear hall with a large utility off, a butlers pantry, an excellent home office (converted cellar), three bedrooms and a bathroom.

Contact Taylors on 01384 395555.



A stunning modern detached property

WALL HEATH

£299,950

Pleasantly situated in a highly sought after village address, 66a Foundry Road, Wall Heath, Dudley, is a stunning and substantial modern four-bedroomed detached family house.

Having impressively spacious, luxury double glazed and centrally heated accommodation over three floors, enhanced by a large full width conservatory extension and two en-suite shower rooms, it is for sale through Taylors at £299,950 with no chain. It is well placed for the village shops and commuter links.

Contact Taylors on 01384 401777.



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Spacious detached home is in a convenient location

HALESOWEN

£114,950

a bathroom and three bedrooms to the first floor.

Its accommodation briefly comprises a lounge, fitted dining kitchen, a rear lobby/breakfast area,

The lounge has a fireplace with a gas fire.

The inner lobby has a cellar off. The dining kitchen includes a double oven and hob with extractor over and stairs leading to the first floor and double glazed window overlooking rear elevation.

Contact Hicks Hadley on 0121 585 6667 or visit www.hickshadley.com



The benchmark for family motoring

By John Griffiths

Vauxhall's Zafira has always been about flexibility and a family-friendly character: a car to carry seven people or the amount of cargo that would otherwise require a medium van.

It's no surprise then that this multi-purpose vehicle (MPV) has established itself as a class leader; even though SUV-styled cars are to some extent stealing its thunder along with that of hatchbacks and saloons.

That might seem a bit odd when these SUVs (most of which don't have off-road or even bad weather capability) can't match the Zafira for sheer space and flexibility, but trends come and go in the motor industry like any other. But loyal MPV owners will be pleased to know Vauxhall is not only sticking with the Zafira, it has just launched a new and much improved version.

The latest Zafira Tourer is bigger, tuned to provide a better drive and kitted out with some of the latest computer, connectivity and safety technology, including the unique to Vauxhall OnStar system which could save your life or get your car back if it's stolen.

List prices range from £18,665 to £29,630 and engines include a 1.4 litre petrol turbo with 140PS, a 1.6 litre, 136PS turbo diesel and a 2.0 litre diesel with 170PS.

The test car was a mid-range at £23,370, in Tech Line and powered by the bigger engine and six-speed manual gearbox. That seems like value for money bearing in mind the high levels of standard equipment, space and practicality compared to many hatchbacks and SUVs in the same price bracket.

While the most popular engine choice is likely to be the small, 1.6 diesel familiar from

other Vauxhalls such as the new Astra and the Mokka X, the 2.0 litre diesel is worthy of consideration.

Of course it's quicker (0 to 62mph in 9.1 seconds) but I'm not sure an extra second or so off the traffic lights sprint is all that important in this type of car. The real benefit is the 400Nm of torque, which is all there from just 1,750rpm, which gives the engine tremendous flexibility and refinement.

Both engines are noted for their quiet, smooth operation, too, but the 1.6 will no doubt appeal to those who appreciate extra fuel and tax efficiency. The figures for the 2.0 are impressive at 57.7mpg and 129g/km while for the 1.6 they are 66.9mpg and 109g/km.

Don't write off the petrol alternative, though. While the capacity is just 1,400cc, remember this engine is turbocharged and so is endowed with a lot more power and torque – 140PS, 200NM and a sprint time of under ten seconds to 62mph. The official fuel economy figure is 42.2mpg and 158g/km. It can also save on your initial outlay, as model for model it's cheaper to buy than the diesel options.

The interior is still one of the most flexible in the market, with each of the five second and third row seats capable of being folded flat with just one hand. Those in the second row slide forward in the same flowing movement, allowing easier access to the third row.

With seven passengers on board, cargo space is limited but with five adults on board it's an impressive 710 litres, rising to a van-like 1,880 litres. You can, of course, fold down one, two, three four or five seats to juggle between passengers and cargo which makes it ideal for business use and the family.

The front architecture is new, too, reflecting the 'face' of the new Astra and underneath



The front architecture of the latest Vauxhall Zafira is now, reflecting the 'face' of the new Astra

there is a new suspension system front and rear.

The dash is dominated by the colour touchscreen controller which is multifunctional, controlling features such as navigation, audio and connectivity.

The lounge style seating includes a centre armrest with a variety of storage solutions, and electronic climate control, steering wheel mounted remote controls, privacy rear windows, cruise control, speed limiter, electric

windows and automatic headlights and wipers are standard, too.

Multiple airbags, ABS and an electronic stability system are part of the safety package.

The test car was also fitted with OnStar, the Vauxhall system which allows you to talk to an adviser at the company's Luton headquarters at the touch of a button. They can, using telematics, advise on the condition of the car such as oil levels or tyre pressures, or download a route into the car's navigation

system. It can even help you find a 'lost' car by switching on the lights or sounding the horn. But more seriously, if your car is stolen it can track it and disable the ignition until the police arrive.

There's also an 'SOS' which, if pressed, can allow the operator to send the emergency services to your location.

Such technology, combined with space, practicality and comfort, makes the new Zafira Tourer the benchmark for family motoring.

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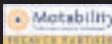
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All-rounder receives new technology

The comprehensive revision of the Škoda Octavia family continues. Now, after the hatchback, estate and the fastest model variant – the Škoda Octavia vRS, comes the most versatile member of the family with various innovations in technology and equipment.

The upgraded Škoda Octavia Scout launches with two engine variants and state-of-the-art all-wheel-drive technology with electronically controlled, hydraulic multi-plate clutch. With a ground clearance that has been increased by 30 mm in comparison to the Škoda Octavia estate, the compact five-door also masters rough terrain. Beyond that, it impresses with good climbing capability, a high towing capacity and numerous 'Simply Clever' features from Škoda.

The robust all-rounder impresses with a distinctive off-road look, innovative all-wheel drive, the best driving characteristics and increased versatility both on and off the road. The comprehensively reworked Scout bears the same front as the newest generation of Škoda Octavias and thereby underlines the family resemblance: it features a more prominent bonnet, the new front end with wide radiator grille and additional headlights with a crystalline look, full-LED headlights with adaptive front headlights. Also the modified fog lights and tail lights are equipped with LED technology. Its independent character is recognisable by silver-coloured underbody protection at the front and the rear. The Rough-Road package is also part of standard equipment and features covering for the undercarriage as well as brake and fuel lines.

The Scout impresses with its interior space, which for the compact car segment is particularly generous, good body layout, distinct versatility, high level of functionality and great driving characteristics. Besides the



The Scout has good boot capacity

increased ground clearance, the all-wheel drive with electronically controlled, hydraulic multi-plate clutch, which comes as standard, also ensures even greater driving pleasure off the road. When driving on rough terrain the advantages of the ramp angles, which have been increased to 16.6 degrees at the front and 14.5 degrees at the rear, become apparent.

Both the front and rear axle of the car are fitted with an electronic differential lock (EDL) as standard. EDL allows the car to pull away smoothly on difficult surfaces, transmitting drive to both the front and rear axles.

For safer and easier descents on rough terrain the off-road function is available for the Scout. When in use the speed of the vehicle is consistently maintained without the driver needing to do anything. Modern engine management, which increases safety during descents using braking, makes life easier.

The 'Simply Clever' features include a heated steering wheel and seats with the Thermo-Flux function which, from time to time, increases the air and moisture



The Škoda Octavia Scout is the most versatile member of the family

permeability and provides considerably more riding comfort in different climatic conditions – the upgraded Scout is therefore an adventurer in the truest sense. The boot has a capacity of 610 to 1740 litres and thanks to its width of 1010 mm, is also perfectly suited to transporting bulky loads without any problems. Numerous storage solutions in the interior increase practicality. Towing capacity is up to two tonnes, depending on the engine.

The reworked adventurer is available from market launch with two different four-cylinder engine variants:

2.0 TDI: 110 kW (150 PS), top speed 129 mph, 0 – 62 mph in 9.1 seconds, combined consumption 56.5 mpg, CO₂ 130 g/km

2.0 TDI: 135 kW (184 PS), top speed 136 mph, 0 – 62 mph in 7.8 seconds, combined consumption 55.4 mpg, CO₂ 133 g/km.

The current car is equipped with all the modern infotainment systems of the new Škoda generation. All of the capacitive touch displays feature a glass design. As the top-of-the-line version, the Columbus navigation system has a 9.2-inch monitor and an LTE module, and provides passengers with a Wi-Fi hotspot. The automatic 'eCall' emergency call is available as an option. The mobile online services from Škoda Connect are the ideal complement to the modern infotainment.

The wide range of driver assistance systems in the Scout sets new standards within its segment. Innovations here include Trailer Assist, Blind Spot Detect and Rear Traffic Alert. The Crew Protect Assist function, which closes windows and the sunroof in the event of an impending accident and tensions the seat belts on the front seats, is connected to the improved Front Assist function.

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Bargain £500 no offers.

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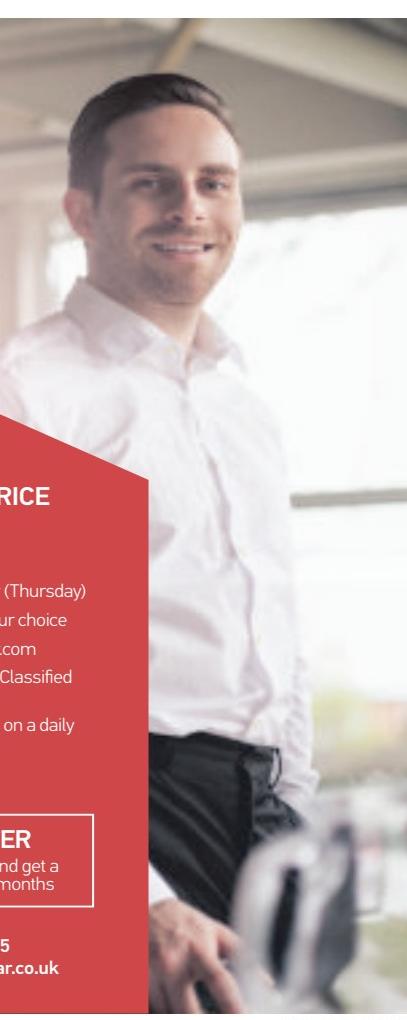
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1.2CC

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£995.

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*All prices are subject to VAT

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Wolverhampton & Bilston AC's Psalm Roberts-Nash and Ellis Greatrex

Snooker champion Reanne Evans

Priory Park Boxing Club chairman Paul Gough with Dudley North MP Ian Austin

Sports stars grow from grassroots

SPORTING FEATURE

NICK ELWELL looks at some of the local sports stars who made the headlines in 2016

TEENAGERS Charlotte Breen and Katy Murmanis began the new year with Georgia on their minds.

The talented Tettenhall and Black Country Volleyball Club players were selected to play for England in their European Under-19 clashes with Georgia and Belarus.

Bilbrook Junior FC had cause for celebration in January after landing a £400,000 windfall from the FA, to be used on a new changing pavilion and improved pitches.

In February, Wednesfield Aces became the first cycle speedway club to receive money from Sport England with £6,000 to help fund coaching courses and new equipment. Meanwhile, East Park Wolves cycle speedway club marked their milestone 10th anniversary.

Wolverhampton and Bilston AC duo Ellis Greatrex and Psalm Roberts-Nash, both 16, claimed first and second in the 400m at both the Welsh Under-20 and senior championships.

Crowned

Sandwell's Kimura Shukokai Portway Karate team had 13 members called up by England for the World Championships in Berlin. In the boxing ring, Merridale BC's Akash Tuqir, 17, was crowned champion at the England Youth Championships in Rotherham.

Halesowen's Laura Barker, 22, became a golden girl in the +70kg category at the British National Pro Jiu Jitsu Championships in London.

In March, 13-year-old Bloxwich jiu jitsu ace Lewis New, man, of Simkin Martial Arts Academy in Walsall, struck gold on a historic night for the Wolverhampton Sunday Football League as four female officials took charge of the Harry Round Cup final for the first time.

Halesowen Athletic Club honoured their most famous runner. A plaque was unveiled in Somers Square while the drive at the Abbey Stadium was named after Jack Price, who ran in the 1908 Olympic marathon in London and led the formation of the club in the 1920s.

Dudley electrician Scott Palmer was called up to represent Great Britain at the European Sprint Duathlon in Germany. Year 10 and 11 girls from Coppice Performing Arts School were crowned national futsal champions.

Cannock's Zac Evans was buzzing after winning the EKF European Welterweight title, defeating Jean Marie Pierak



Jeweller Aaron Sheldon and auctioneer Ben Gamble with the Wednesbury Charity Cup

at the Lincoln Fight Factory. April saw the covers come off Springhill Cricket Club's new pavilion, while girl power ruled on a historic night for the Wolverhampton Sunday Football League as four female officials took charge of the Harry Round Cup final for the first time.

Stourbridge karate ace Liam Reynolds was crowned an English champion at the age of 10. Meanwhile, 3 Hammers Golf claimed the Critchley Award from the Golf Foundation for its work in encouraging youngsters to take up the sport.

Walking football took centre stage at Molineux, while Wednesbury 11-year-olds Amillia Baker and Kirsty Maull

the Staffs and West Midlands League Individual Championship in May. Wodensborough BC's Benjamin Whittaker, 18, lifted the England Elite middleweight title, days after selection for the England podium squad. Snooker star Mark Allen checked into Bilston's Golden Cue club to help pocket £2,500 for Dudley Mind and the Deanesley Centre at New Cross Hospital.

Stourbridge karate ace Liam Reynolds was crowned an English champion at the age of 10. Meanwhile, 3 Hammers Golf claimed the Critchley Award from the Golf Foundation for its work in encouraging youngsters to take up the sport.

Walking football took centre stage at Molineux, while Wednesbury 11-year-olds Amillia Baker and Kirsty Maull

smashed their way to a national table tennis title. Former world champion Ken Doherty was the guest of honour at the Stourbridge Snooker League annual awards night. Penn Cricket Club took the wraps off their new £70,000 clubhouse and £25,000 state-of-the-art net facility.

Legendary football scout Les Green called time on his days of talent spotting at the age of 77.

Another former snooker champion, John Parrott, was guest of honour for the Staffs and West Midlands League awards night. Priory Park Boxing Club's new-look gym was opened in the presence of MP Ian Austin.

Wolverhampton University's Walsall campus was the venue for the Black Country School Games, featuring more than 1,400 youngsters.

Cyril Hockham took to the green at Willenhall Trinity Bowls Club to celebrate his 100th birthday in July.

Fordhouses under-13 cricketers were the pride of Staffordshire, becoming Nat West Club County champions.

The Dudley & Cradley Heath League was forced to blow the final whistle after a 106 years of competition.

Another local football league, the Wolverhampton Combination, admitted defeat in its battle to continue, after 113 years.

Powered

Halesowen Cricket Club landed their first major piece of silverware in 14 years in September, lifting the WCB Canterbury Cup at New Road.

Willenhall Trinity Bowls Club clinched their first-ever Staffordshire club competition, while Burntwood's Last Chance Saloon powered to the Great Britain Tug of War Federation Championship.

Landywood player Jack Harris potted his way to victory over snooker legend Jimmy White in a charity exhibition at Bilston's Golden Cue for the Paul Hunter Foundation.

In October, former New Zealand cricketer Jeremy Coney was the guest of honour as Netherton Cricket Club rounded off their 150th anniversary year with a dinner at Dudley's Village Hotel.

Aldridge cricketer Robert Steadman, a 16-year-old all-rounder, was named Young Volunteer of The Year at the NatWest Outstanding Service to Cricket Awards at Lord's.

In November, Burntwood racer Lloyd Shelley defended his Formula 600 title and winning the Sound of Thunder Class, while Kamila Czartolomma's powerboating success reaped reward for South Staffs SC in December.

Wood Green Athletic were celebrating a £1,000 windfall thanks to the sale of te 136-year-old Wednesbury Cup at auction. Willenhall Rugby Club stalwart Elwyn Pugh was honoured with a lifetime achievement award by the RFU.

Final whistle



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Taking look back at 2016's grassroots achievements

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Banks's turns into boxing battleground

ERROL Johnson's Black Country Boxing returns to Walsall next month with a four-fight Boxing Dinner Show at the Banks's Stadium.

'Battleground' features a quartet of undefeated boxers on the February 17 card.

Hot Halesowen prospect Lennox Clarke is in action as he looks to secure a title shot in 2017. The 25 year-old is unbeaten in 14 professional contests and has set his sights on a showdown with English Super Middleweight Champion Jahmaine Smyle. 'Dangerous' Clarke was ringside in November when Smyle retained his belt with a split decision victory over Leon McKenzie.

Talented Lichfield flyweight Brad Foster is also in action. 'The Blade' has recorded five straight professional victories since making the switch from kick boxing 12 months ago. The 19-year-old recently signed a three-year promotional contract with Frank Warren and, after securing nine world titles in kickboxing, is looking to reach world level as a boxer. Foster will enjoy a six round tune-up.

Former amateur star Connor Parker will be looking to build on his recent impressive professional debut when he fights in the paid ranks for just the second time. The Swadlincote super lightweight debuted in Tewkesbury in December and will be looking to make waves in the professional ranks in 2017.

West Bromwich light heavyweight prospect Joshua Stokes completes the card. Josh, brother of undefeated middleweight prospect Tom, will make his professional debut after a solid amateur career with Wodensborough ABC.

Standard tickets for 'Battleground', priced at £35, are available by calling the boxers, £60 VIP tickets for tables of 10, with two-course meal, are available by calling Walsall FC on 01922 651414/416.

New rider Ayres his thanks at response from Heathens fans

CRADLEY rider Danny Ayres has been overwhelmed by the welcome from fans since joining the club last month.

Ayres will meet supporters for the first time when he appears on stage at Cradley Heath Liberal Club on Friday, February 3 with a bumper turnout expected.

It promises to be an entertaining evening as the 29-year-old talks about his life and career.

Ayres has made the switch to the Heathens from Kent – and he already has a big fan base in the West Midlands after wowing crowds during guest appearances for the club.

Said Ayres, who has revealed he is ahead of schedule in his recovery from shoulder surgery at the beginning of December: "I've been over the moon with the reaction from the Cradley fans. The support I've got has been great, and there couldn't really have been a better response since it's been announced."

The 'Danny Ayres Show' – hosted by broadcaster Nigel Pearson – starts at 7.30pm and admission is £5 on the door. The club will announce details of their meet the team night at the event.

Cricket club mourns batting legend



Legend Fred Parkin

THE funeral was taking place this week of one of Netherton Cricket Club's finest batsmen.

Club legend Fred Parkin passed away at the age of 98. Along with fellow run-getter Sid Allport, he was a dominant force at the Highbridge Road club in the 1960s.

Fred was also a well-known figure at Dudley Golf Club having turned to the fairways when he ended his playing days with Netherton at the age of 55.

Born in Jacksdale, Nottinghamshire, Fred moved to Dudley in 1958 to become deputy head at Holly Hall School. After

seeing his dream of becoming a pilot dashed, he served as a PE instructor before spending four years in Port Elizabeth, South Africa helping injured and wounded servicemen with their rehabilitation.

He returned to England and after a teaching spell in Norfolk he moved to the Black Country with his wife Edwina, son Jeremy and daughter Diane. He began playing for Netherton in 1959.

Jeremy said: "He liked rugby and football but cricket was his first love and he loved playing for Netherton. He averaged over 50 for Netherton and won the batting

award on numerous occasions." Jeremy, 65, who also played for Netherton and has served as secretary, added: "From what I have read and from what I have been told he was one of the best batsmen on the local cricket scene in the 1960s."

"My dad and Sid Allport were very good friends and were a formidable pairing out in the middle."

The pair shared a record second-wicket stand of 206 in 1961 with Fred scoring the first century recorded on the club's new scoreboard. His funeral was taking place at Gornal Crematorium on Tuesday.

DK avenge early season derby defeat

DK 34 Wolverhampton 13

A LARGE crowd gathered at Heathbrook for this local derby. And they saw DK gain revenge for a 7-5 defeat in the corresponding fixture on the third week of the season.

DK have found a rich vein of form and had won six on the bounce going into this game, though only three points separated the teams in the league.

The hosts were kicking towards the clubhouse end to begin with and were awarded an early penalty for off side which was converted by Duncan Tompkins to give them the lead.

When Liam Marshall burst through and drew in the last defender, he put in right winger Nic Adams to score in the corner, but Tompkins failed with the conversion attempt.

A penalty put Wolverhampton on the scoresheet, but two Tompkins kicks gave DK a 14-3 advantage. It was 19-3 when Tommy Walker went over in the corner.

In the final moments of the first half, Wolverhampton capitalised on a DK error to get back to 19-10 with a converted try.

And early in the second half, a long-range kick brought them back to 19-13, putting the outcome in the balance.

The referee awarded DK two kickable penalties, however, one converted by Tompkins to make it 22-13.

From a lineout, Danny Hawkins broke off to score, and with the extras added, DK led 29-13.

The intensity of the game overflowed with two yellow cards issued and the referee and the two captains having discussions on more than one occasion.

The game concluded with Mitch Grealey able to score in the corner, securing a bonus point try.

DK's next two fixtures are away to second-placed Bournville and at home to Burton, who are third.

'Yozza' through to second round tie

TIPTON'S Jamie Hughes comprehensively made it through to the second round of the BDO World Championship as he saw off Martin Atkins at Lakeside.

The 30-year-old dropped a set after striking first blood early on but peeled away to secure his passage through on Sunday night, writes Craig Birch.

The fourth seed kept his head and fired in four 180s along the way, averaging 94.38 to his fellow England international's 88.68.

The Black Country thrower will now take on Jim Williams in round two. He whitewashed Tony O'Shea 3-0 in the first round for the second year in a row.

Wycombe Wanderers 2 Stourbridge 1

PROUD boss Gary Hackett hailed Stourbridge's Cup heroes after their fairytale ended and declared: "Now let's win promotion."

Adebayo Akinfenwa's late winner saw the Glassboys' historic run halted at the third round in front of more than 2,000 travelling supporters. Hackett, whose team had dumped out League One Northampton in the previous round, hopes his players can now take their form into the battle for promotion from the Evo-Stik Northern Premier Division, writes Matt Maher.

"We have a level headed bunch of players and they know what is needed now," he said. "We have to make sure we get in the play-offs at worst. Our aim at the start of the season was promotion and that is still it."

Stour looked destined to claim at least a replay when Dan Scarr cancelled out Sam Wood's opener 20 minutes from time.

Settled

Skipper Tom Tonks hit the underside of the bar before Akinfenwa settled the tie in the League Two side's favour with a late header.

Tonks, meanwhile, believes the Glassboys – playing in the third round for the first time in their 140-year history – delivered everything but the result. "Obviously we are a little bit gutted," he said. "But we have now matched a Football League team twice in the FA Cup. I could not have asked for anything more than the result."

So, the fairytale might be over but if you needed to see what the Cup run has done for Stourbridge, you only had to look at the stands which filled with their supporters and delivered a deafening noise long before kick-off.

Things reached a crescendo when Scarr dragged the Glassboys level with 20 minutes to go, cancelling out the early second half opener. But Akinfenwa took advantage of the only space afforded to him all afternoon by Stour's defence to head home a winner for the Chairboys seven minutes from time.

Attention will now turn back to Stourbridge's battle for promotion from the Evo-Stik Northern Premier and they head to Skelmersdale on Saturday.



Dan Scarr slots home the Stourbridge equaliser during the FA Cup third round tie at Wycombe

Yeltz fail to Buck losing trend

Halesowen Town 2 Buxton 4

OUT of form Halesowen crashed to a dismal defeat against ten-man Buxton, despite taking an early lead.

Kaiman Anderson turned home a 30th minute rebound to put Halesowen ahead after Buxton's former Wolves goalkeeper Jan Budtz saved from Jordan Goddard. Matters looked even more grave for the visitors just four minutes later when Brad Grayson was given a straight red card for dissent to the officials.

But 10-man Buxton then introduced livewire substitute Jamie Jackson and he stunned the home crowd into disbelief by hitting two goals in six minutes to give Buxton a surprising half-time lead, before creating two further second-half goals as the Yeltz fell apart. Jackson slammed home a

great finish from the right with his first touch of the game to level after 39 minutes and Jackson then put Buxton 2-1 ahead in the 45th minute as he held off Liam Slade to slot another fine finish down the centre.

The Bucks made it a remarkable 3-1 in the 51st minute with Jackson causing the damage once again as he fired at goalkeeper John Bateman, allowing Greg Young to bundle home the loose ball.

Asa Charlton touched home to reduce the arrears at 3-2 in the 72nd minute after Budtz made a complete hash of substitute Matt Birley's free-kick. But dangerman Jackson completed Halesowen's misery by providing table-topping Buxton's fourth goal in the final minute as he surged down the right and squared for fellow substitute Nicky Walker to turn home.

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